THE OFFICIAL SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

Dreamcast

ISSUE 34 £2.95
AUGUST 1998





EXCLUSIVE!

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

WORLD'S BEST BLASTER!

Radiant Silvergun Set To Stun!

DREAMCAST EXCLUSIVE!

Incredible All-New Screenshots You Simply MUST See!



Castlevania X: Magical Mayhem!

BEWITCHED!

PLUS! DEEP FEAR, SHADOWS OF THE TUSK, FIGHTING VIPERS 2 INTERVIEW, WACHENLODER, SHINING FORCE 3 TIPS, RIVEN GUIDE, VIRTUAL ON OT, FIRST SPIKE SHOTS... AND MORE!

All Right?



In this issue's News section, we reveal some pretty important info about the future of the magazine. Don't worry - we aren't going anywhere, but we do need to address the fact that the Sega world is changing before our eyes, and it's only right and proper that the magazine evolves to meet the challenges of the future...

Despite our exclusive Dreamcast coverage in this issue of the magazine, it's only fair to point out that there's some seriously cool Saturn stuff around as well. This issue, thanks to a major assist from Treasure in Japan, we're able to bring you some excellent Radiant Silvergun coverage. It's frustrating that it's not going to get a UK release because we're more than impressed (try gobsmacked) with this stunning game.

Even without taking into account games such as Dead or Alive and Grandia, it's worth getting your Saturn switched fully just to play Treasure's latest - it's the hardest, most challenging blaster ever released... and it stretches the graphical limits of the Saturn still further! Put simply, it's Treasure back to their very best - truly a game in the same leagues of excellence as the firm's legendary Megadrive titles Gunstar Heroes and Alien Soldier.

This issue's cover game, Castlevania X, is yet another example of how import gaming is becoming an essential staple for the Saturn owner... despite its retro 2D style, this platform action RPG is well worth its vast 94% mark - it's a masterpiece of playability. Some Japanese text might put you off guard, but rest assured that once again SSM will be providing full-on tips coverage next month to help you through the game. No problem.

Finally, just take a quick scan through the contents of this issue - I defy any one to challenge the SSM assertion that the Sega scene isn't more exciting than it has ever been before! We want to hear your views about the future, the magazine... well, anything really. Get writing to us now.

RICH LEADBETTER

Saturn Mag Playlist

1. Radiant Silvergun
2. Deep Fear
3. Castlevania X
4. Shining Force III
5. World League Soccer '98



▲ Castlevania X: top 2D Saturn action!

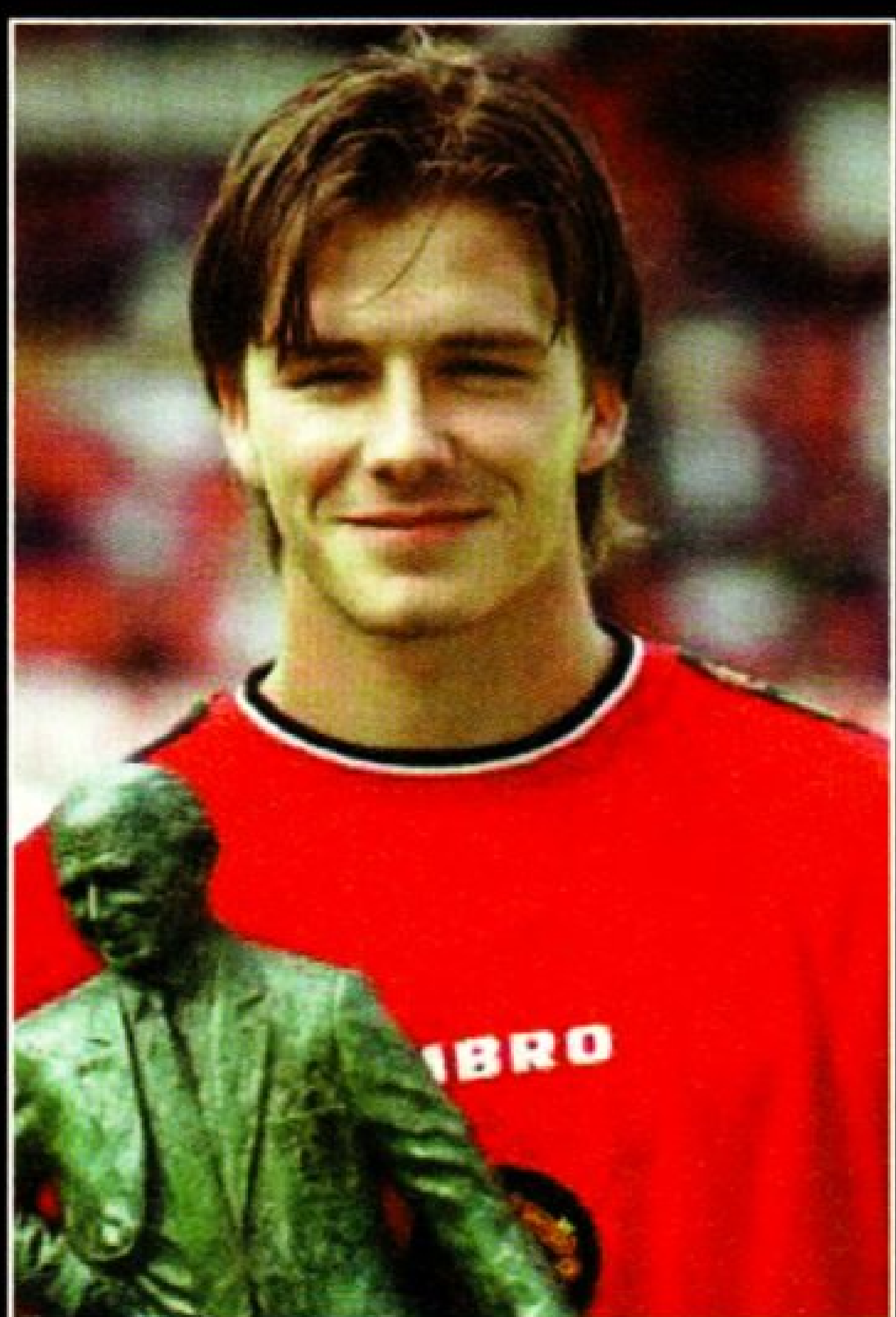
Top Ten Annoyances

1. David Beckham, for ruining the greatest England game since 4-1 against Holland in Euro '96. We will not forget.
2. Getting Scotland in the office World Cup sweepstake (Nick)
3. Getting Colombia in the office World Cup sweepstake (Matt)
4. Getting South Africa in the office World Cup sweepstake (Gary)
5. Getting Yugoslavia (Jason)
6. Jimmy Hill
7. The jammy Germans
8. Shining Force III - delayed, put back...
9. Street Fighter Collection - delayed etc...
10. Lee returning from holiday

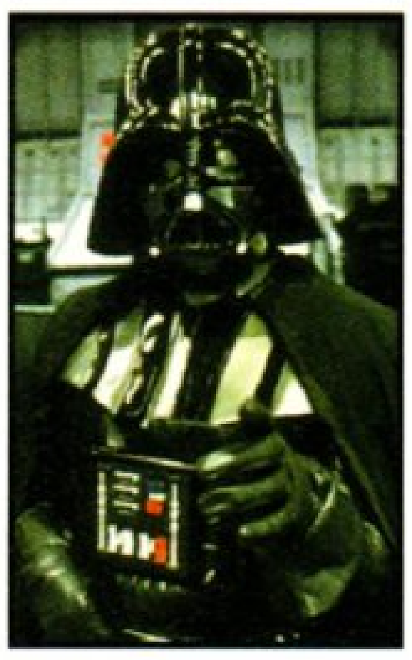
Something for the Girls!

No 3: 'Becksy'!

You would, wouldn't you? Even we would - and we're right-thinking men to the very last. There ought to be some kind of law to stop people being as Jammy as David - he makes the rest of us feel like the kind of kids who always get picked last and smell of wee. For us, the dream of scoring for England then rogering a Spice Girl to celebrate remains disappointingly distant, but we can dream...



▲ The petulant boy who destroyed England's World Cup hopes. Get that smirk off your face.



MATT

With less than a year to go until the launch of the new Star Wars film, Matt's been preparing for the event by transforming his house into a 100% accurate model of the Millennium Falcon. He's also been wearing a big black leather costume and breathing in a heavy fashion, but what he does in his personal life is none of our business...



WARREN

Or 'Super Deformed UniMech Warren X' to give Warren his full name. The streets of Neo-Tokyo are his playground, modem dial-tones are his music and his girlfriend has probably got blue hair and really big eyes. He speeds through post-apocalyptic nuclear wastelands on his zero-grav Hovaspeeda, before uploading info to us via his MultiLink Global Defence Substation.



LEE

Lee was on an episode of Jerry Springer recently, it was titled "Help me Jerry! I'm covered in hair and can't control my primal urges!" Everything went okay until Lee, fuelled by a deadly cocktail of alcohol and raw meat, started barking at terrified audience members and sniffing the bottoms of other guests. Jerry's final thought: "Get him out of here. GET HIM OUT!"



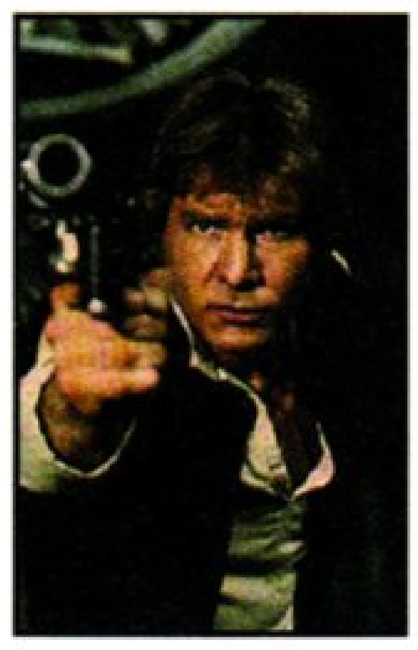
GARY

Gary wasn't on Jerry Springer, but he did appear in an episode of 'The X-Files'. He didn't audition for the role - he received a message to hidden in the static on his TV set at home, which he regularly watches for days on end. Confusing lights, strange garbled speech, freakish alien looks and irrational behaviour followed Gary around the whole time - just like normal then.



JASON

Jason's never been on Jerry Springer either, but he was on Tomorrow's World last week, where he unveiled his controversial plans for a futuristic society based upon the exchanging of ideas, love and large quantities of Jam. Jason's 'Jamopolis' would be a massive city floating in the sky, powered by "concentrating really hard", and staffed by robot dogs with"fluffy hair and happy faces".



NICK

Nick's never been on TV at all, but he has starred in a large number of home-made video titles, all of which are extremely unlikely to be broadcast - unless you live in Sweden and have access to the right satellite decoder. Even then, you don't see his face in any of the scenes, but it's still possible to spot Nick's 'shots' thank to the small hairy mole he has on his left inner-thigh.

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RICH'S FINAL WORDS OF THE ISSUE
Radiant Silvergun, eh? What a game! Many thanks to all at Treasure for all their support in bringinig you this issue's excellent coverage!

emap. images

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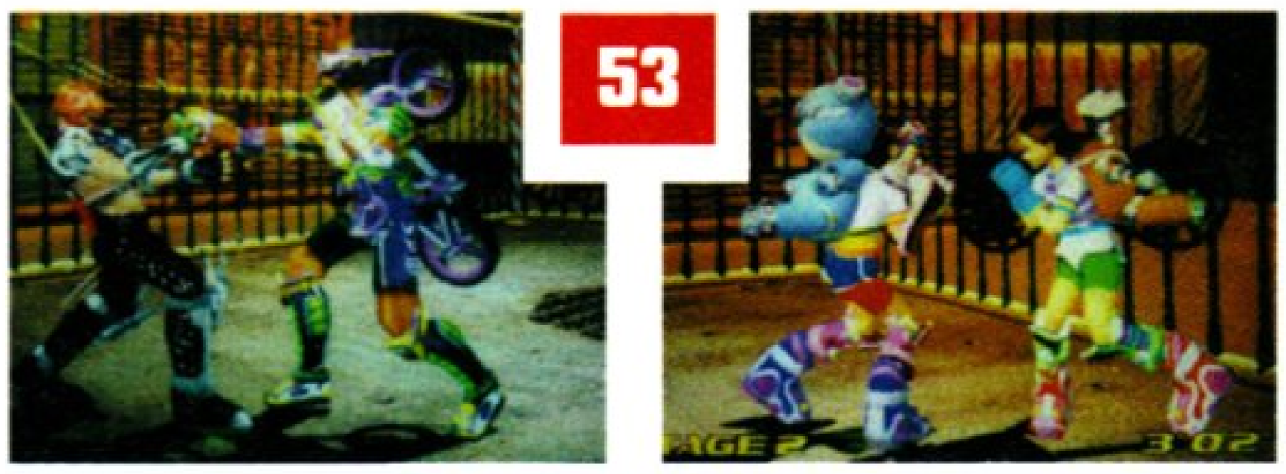


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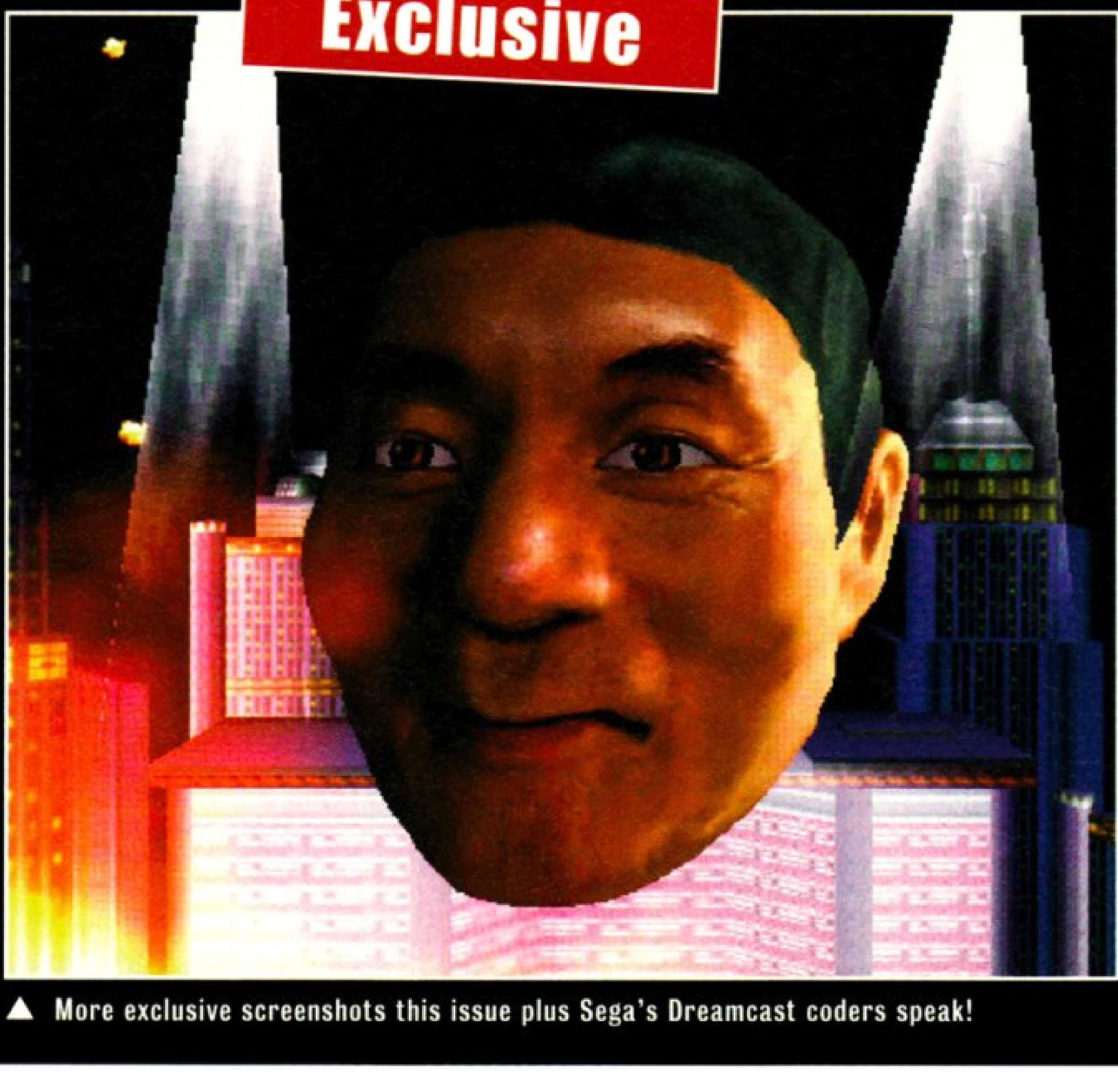


Dreamcast Info Overload

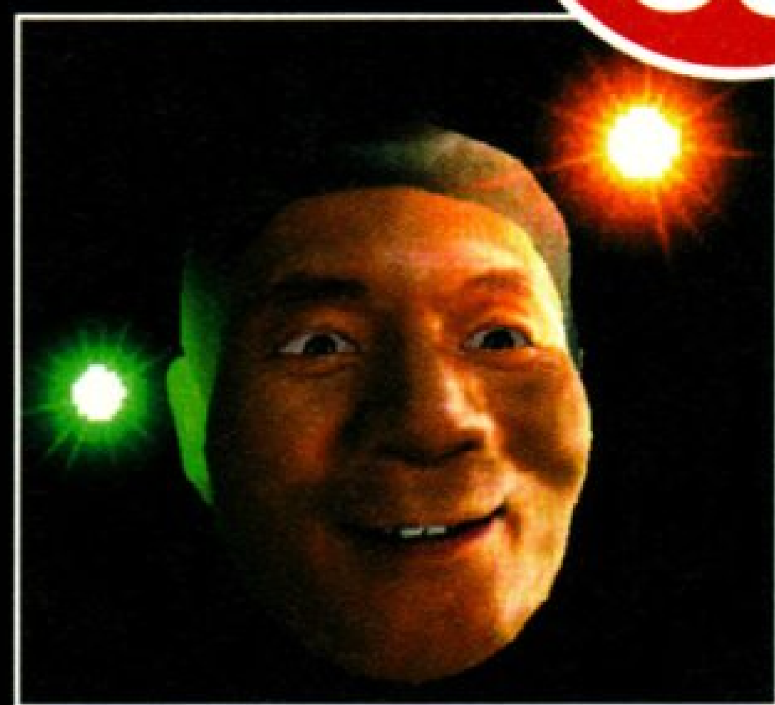
More powerful data on Sega's incredible new machine!

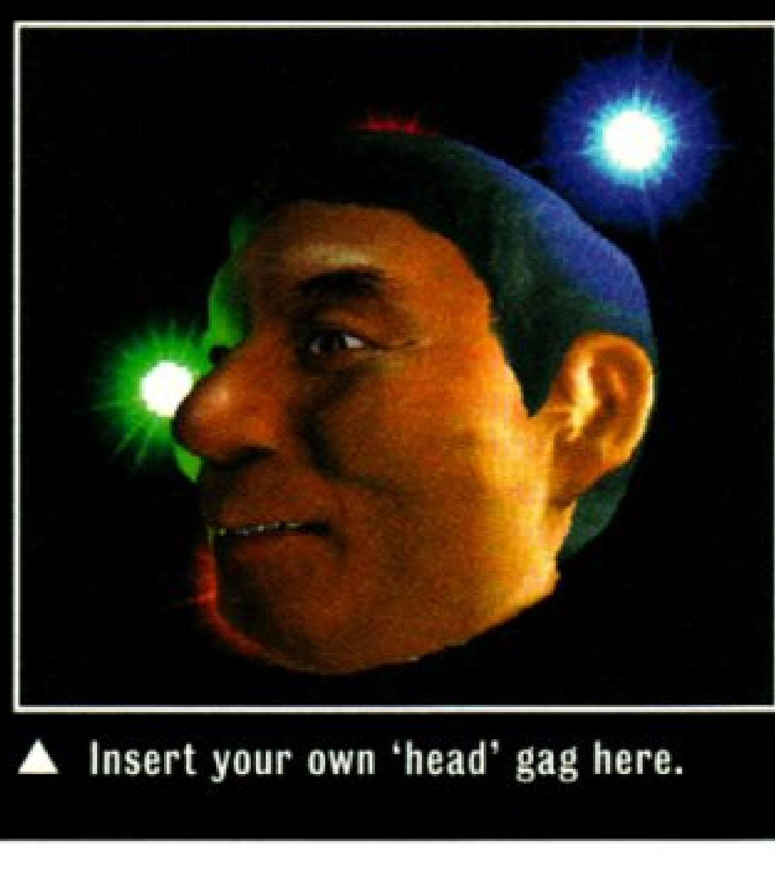
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Exclusive



▲ More exclusive screenshots this issue plus Sega's Dreamcast coders speak!





▲ Insert your own 'head' gag here.



Radiant Silvergun

Page 20



Quite simply the greatest shoot 'em up on any home console ever. Truly.

Castlevania X

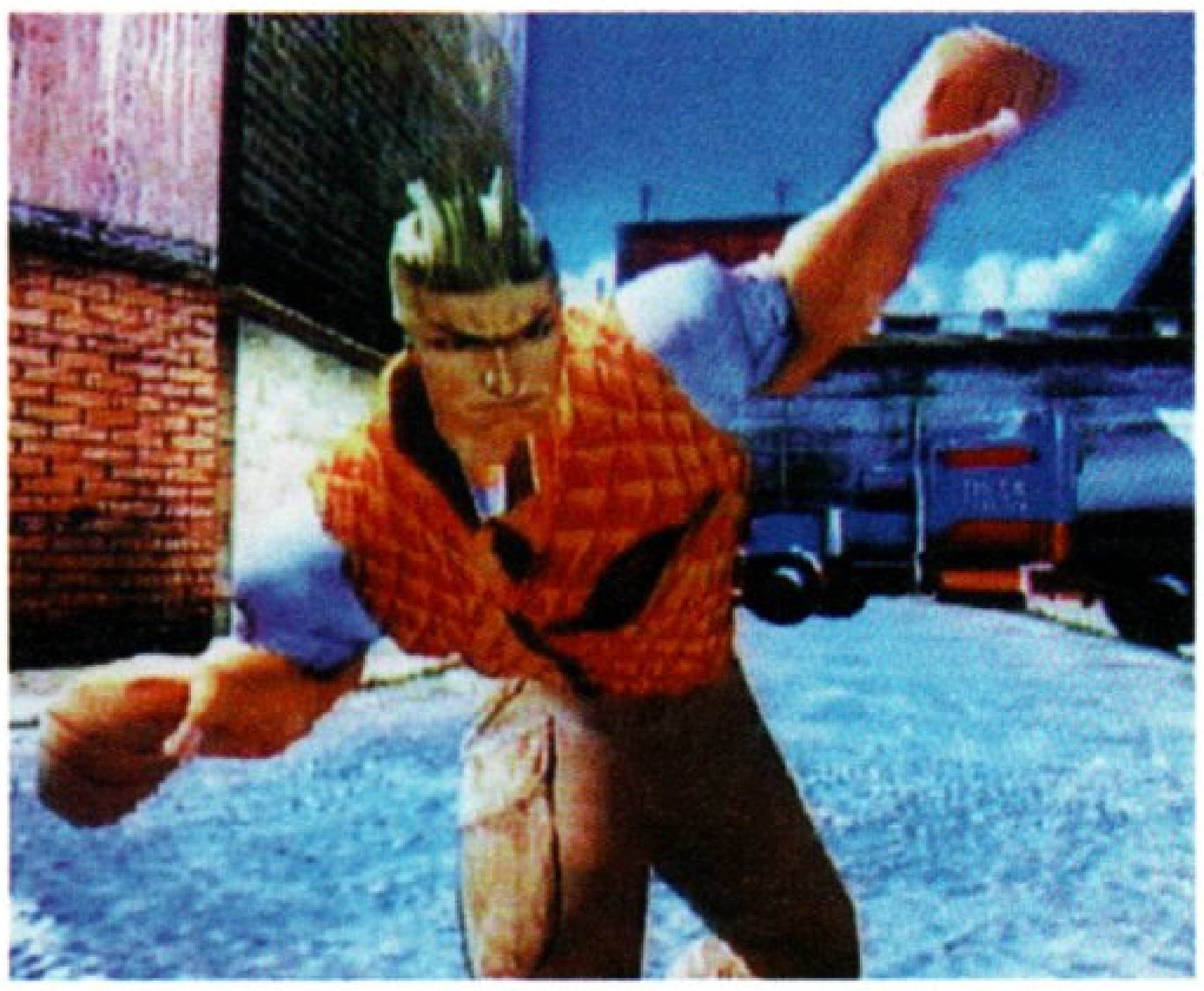
Konami's platform extravaganza comes to Saturn... full feature and review!

Page 56



NEWS

SPIKE!



Take Fighting to the Next Level!

AM2 innovate again with the most original fighting game since Virtua Fighter ■ Four players battle it out in a full-freedom 360 degree environment ■ New levels of interactivity take the genre to the next level ■ It's Gauntlet meets Die Hard Arcade meets Virtua Fighter 3!

This month, AM2 announced the most revolutionary fighting game since the advent of the epoch- making Virtua Fighter... Currently operating under the codename of Spike, this new arcade game threatens to usher in a new era of greatness to the fighting genre. Here's a small idea of what Spike's about...

Two men are brawling in a street, exchanging punches with equal venom. Behind both of them another assailant waits, crowbar in hand, slowly lifting it, waiting to bring it down on the fighter in front of him, thus helping out his friend who isn't faring too well in the battle. Just as the bar reaches the top of its arc, its wielder is viciously taken out by yet another combatant, who's just climbed over the safety rail on top of a building, before jumping down, landing heavily on crowbar boy... See how it works? Spike's all about teamplay!

Meanwhile, in a shopping mall, a massive brawl has broken out in a cafe. At least five grown men are participating in a rampant bust-up, until one man decks the opposition by grabbing hold of a poor guy and swinging him around (using a move similar to Wolf's Giant Swing throw), smacking hell out of the opposition and the scenery as he throws him around.

This is what Spike is all about - it's a massive fighting frenzy, featuring fully interactive backgrounds where you have total freedom of movement... but better still is the news on just how interactive this game truly is. Get this: four players gather for this most royal of rumbles, playing as a team to take down gangs of street thugs! It's fighting action to the max, but with a new dynamic to the carnage - you actually need to watch your friends' backs and help them out as you battle. Hopefully there'll be team moves to do too!

IT'S ABOUT GAMEPLAY

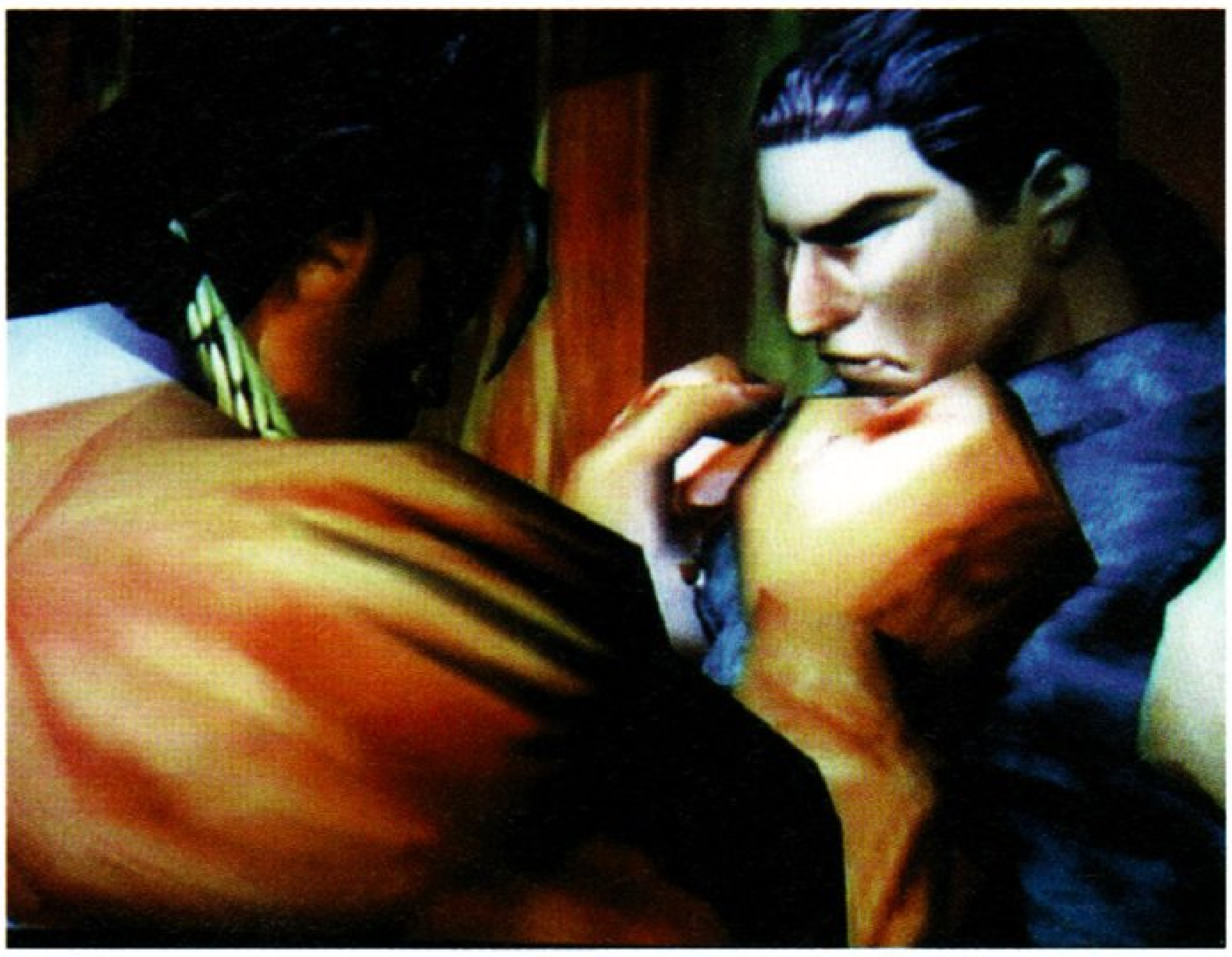
Remember when Virtua Fighter first came out? That game redefined what fighting titles where all about. In addition to the 3D visuals, it also boasted a completely new style of gameplay. And that's really what Spike is all about. Unlike current fighting games, the action takes place in stunningly realistic



▲ All this and sloping floors as well.



▲ Get an idea of the freedom in Spike?



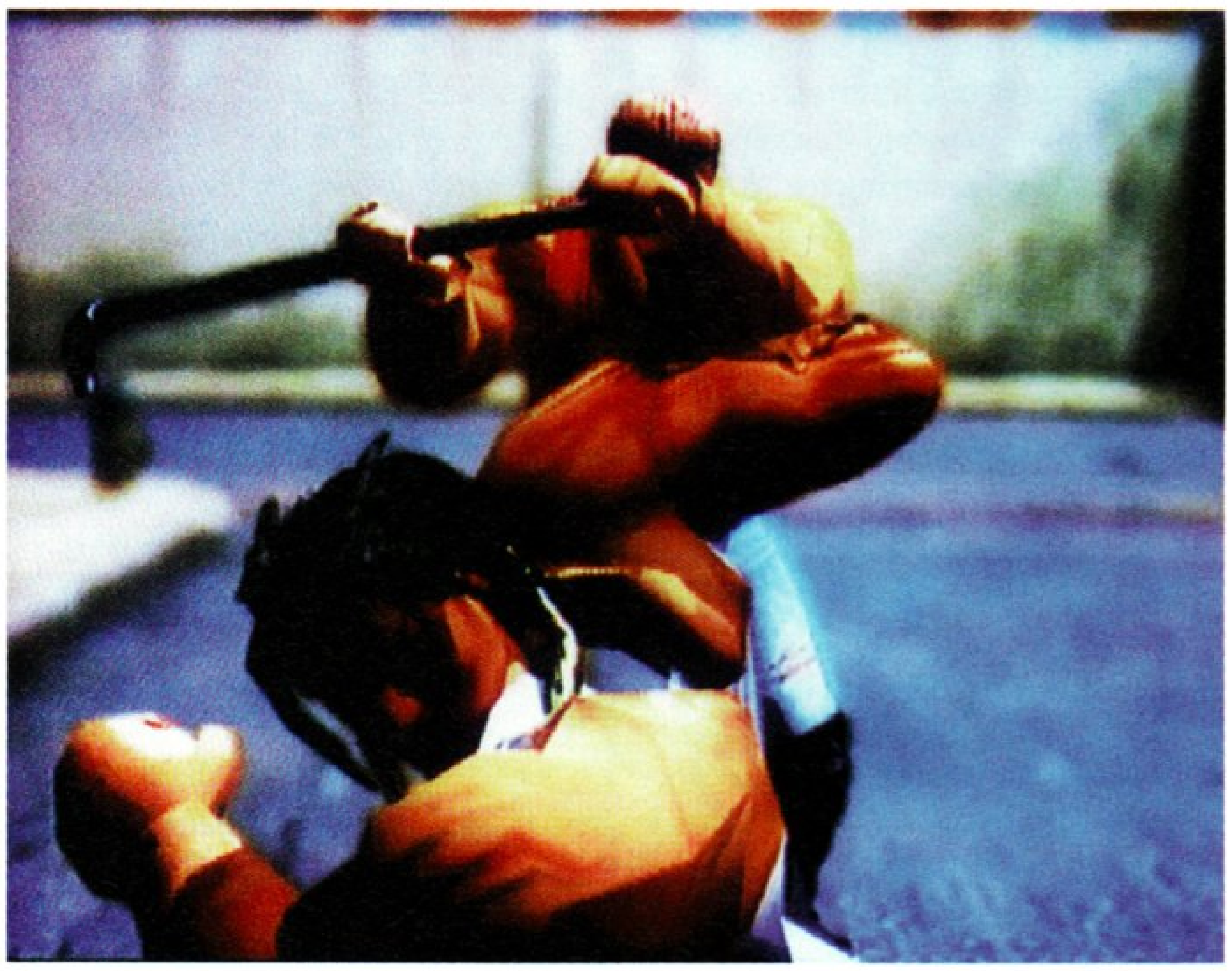
▲ Closing in on the main fighters, you get an idea of the detail AM2 have included.

Info Overload!
Sonic Team Speaks About Dreamcast!
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Yu Suzuki...
AM2 Director on Dreamcast 3D Power!
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The All-New SSM! You Must Read This!
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Out Now
All the latest official Saturn titles reviewed
PAGE 08



▲ It looks as though weaponry, in addition to raw martial arts prowess, can be used.



▲ We think you can safely expect some cool female characters in Spike – fine by us!

environs, including bronx-style urban streets, a shopping mall and a construction site. Unlike the backgrounds in VF and Tekken, these are REAL places - you can go where you want, and your actions affect the backgrounds. Smack someone into a table and it'll go flying!

This also means that Spike isn't just about fighting - it's about using the full 3D areas to your full advantage.

WHAT ABOUT THE FIGHTING?

From what we've seen of Spike, the fighting action itself seems to be quite reminiscent in terms of technique to Virtua Fighter. In amongst the new moves, we spotted Sarah Bryant style kickflips, PPPK combos and of course, the Giant Swing manouevre mentioned earlier. That means you can conceivably be attacked from any one of all 360 degrees! The only question lurking in our minds is how the control method works - how can you retaliate to an attack from any direction? That's what we believe is the biggest challenge AM2 must have faced in Spike's development... how they have fared we won't know until we have played the game ourselves (hopefully soon!)

How can AM2 expand the scope of 3D fighting? Take a look at the innovative Spike!

WHAT HAVE WE SEEN?

At the moment, our knowledge of Spike is limited to our observations of a specially prepared video sent to us from AM2's publicity department in Japan.

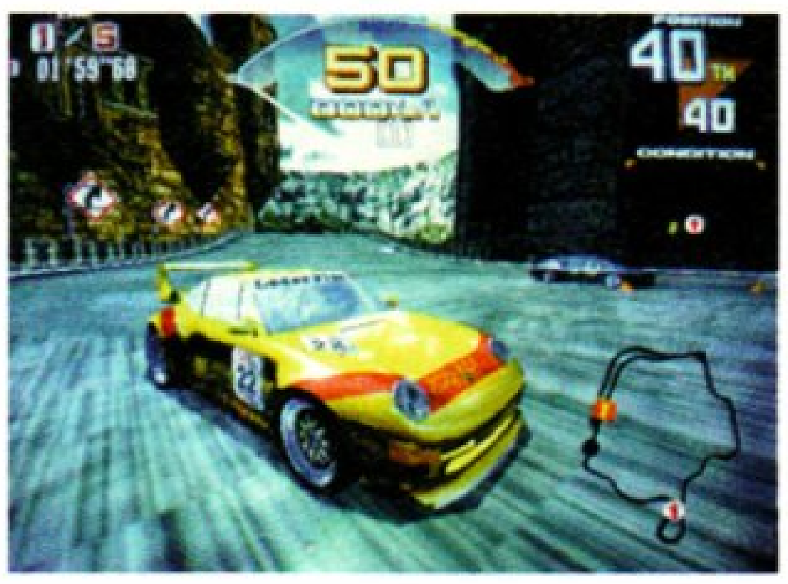
In addition to the jaw-dropping set-pieces mentioned earlier, a special note must be made about the charging super move, where one character unleashes a mighty exploding punch, which sends all surrounding fighters flying... Most impressive of all is the fate of one hapless enemy, who smashes into an oil tanker - such is the power of the impact, the vehicle itself is propelled backwards, crashing into a wall. Now that's power!

I think you can gather that we're getting quite excited about Spike... more news in Coin-Operated soon!

The Seal Of Quality

You can really get a sense for Spike's qualities when you consider just how big a project this is for AM2. It turns out that the main protagonists were designed by the VF3 team, whilst the interactive backgrounds are works of genius emanating from the labs of the Scud Race team. Overseeing the project is Toshihiro Nagoshi, one of AM2's hot directors who recently oversaw the new Daytona USA 2: Battle on the Edge.



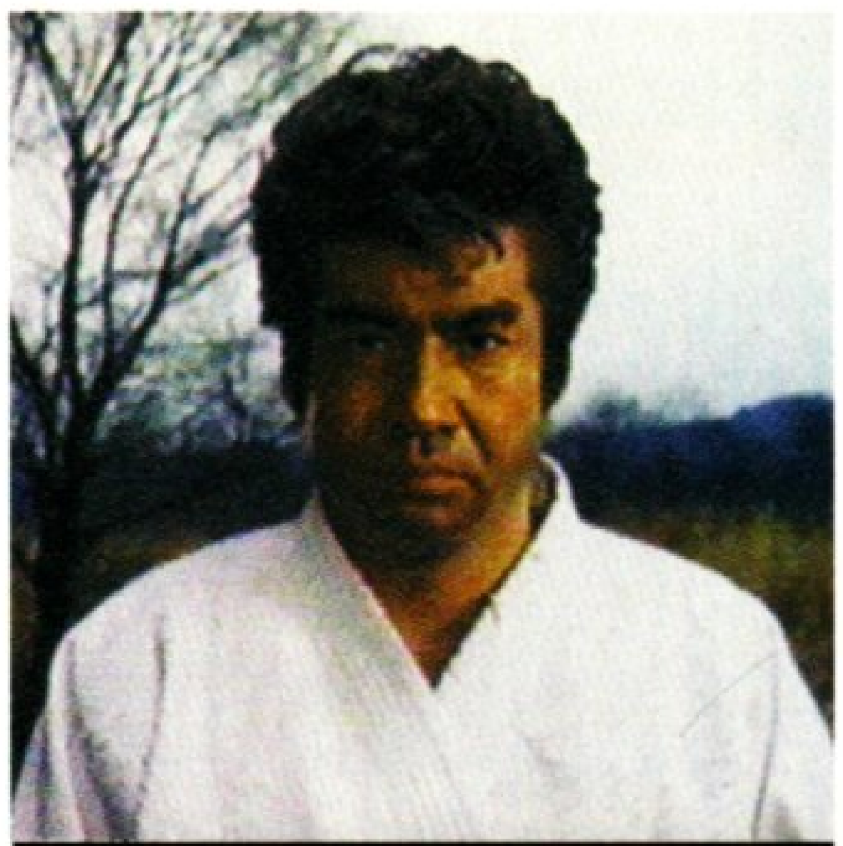


HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

The Model 3 Step 2 arcade board has been kitted out with fibre-optic technology; basically it's a single game local area network (LAN), allowing for the transfer of huge amounts of data - essential when it comes to the intricate nature of the gameplay inherent in Sega's latest line of arcade titles. The first game to use this is the forthcoming AM2 epic, Daytona USA 2: Battle on the Edge.



▲ A new AM2 fighting game... brilliant.



Segata Sanshiro: Mr Sega Saturn!

In Japan he's more famous than Sonic, his CD single has sold more copies than Vampire Savior and he's on TV more than Warp's Kenji Eno. Yes, it's Mr Segata Sanshiro!

The man who's kept the Saturn alive, when many predicted its demise, has become one of Japan's most famous celebrities. In fact, when he appeared at the last Tokyo Game Show, thousands of people swarmed around the Sega booth to see him and he regularly appears in magazines and Sega TV ads. Dressed in Judo kit and Gary Glitter-style quiff, Segata (played by actor Kunihiro Fujioka) seeks out people who don't play with a Saturn and beats them up! Burning Rangers, Panzer Dragoon Saga, Sonic R and Shining Force III are just a few of the big games he's advertised.

Although Sega is trying to keep the Dreamcast image as far away from the Saturn as possible, such is Segata's massive following that Sega seems likely to bring him back for its Dreamcast campaign as well. Segata also appeared in a video at Mr Irimajiri's Dreamcast announcement, and was invited to the Dreamcast party and D2 show!

Riven By Sega - 92%

Out Now

Love it or loathe it, there's no getting away from the fact that Myst is one of the biggest selling videogames ever. Yep, over five million dullards splashed the cash on Cyan's 'interactive adventure', which inevitably spawned a sequel - Riven. At first glance Riven appears quite similar to Myst, what with its reliance on flip-screen puzzles and ambient story-telling style. But further investigation reveals that it's actually a damn sight better. The game's developers have managed to create a fully immersive experience that's much less static than Myst, with hours at a time being lost exploring the incredibly non-linear environment and solving tricky logic puzzles. Oh, and it's huge. The guys at Cyan reckon there's up to 100 hours worth of gameplay in there, making for an enormously challenging experience. It's not going to have you riveted to your seat Resident Evil-style, but if you've got the time and patience to give it a go, most players will find it a deep and thoroughly engrossing game.



▲ Riven: puzzles galore and much more.



▲ Lee's holiday snaps failed to impress us.

Shining Force III By Sega - 92%

Out Now

Much has been made of Square Soft's top-selling RPG, Final Fantasy VII. But with the likes of Grandia, Panzer Dragoon Saga and Shining the Holy Ark emerging on Sega's console, there can be little doubt that the Saturn is the console of choice for the true RPG fan. Add to that list the fully translated Shining Force III released this month and there's little justification for ever leaving your house again. You see, not only does the celebrated role-playing game offer some of the most visually pleasing and challenging gameplay around, but it offers a far greater degree of freedom than any other RPG you may care to mention. This is where the true greatness of Shining Force III lies, enabling players to be masters of their own destiny. Bundle in the clever character interaction and what could well be the most open-ended role-player ever, and what you're left with is an epoch-making Saturn RPG. We only hope Sega has the good sense to translate the next two episodes of this awesome series.







▲ Oy, Sega! Where's Part 2 then?

Street Fighter Collection By Virgin - 92%

Out Now

We reviewed Street Fighter Collection waaaaay back in issue #25 of SSM, but for some inexplicable reason Virgin has delayed its release time and time again. Grrrrr..... At the time of writing it's the end of June and we're reliably informed that SFC is now in the shops. But don't blame us if it isn't.

Anyway, here goes. What you get for your money is arcade-perfect translations of THREE Street Fighter classics - those being Super Street Fighter II, Super Street Fighter II Turbo and Street Fighter Alpha 2 Gold. The first two games are pretty ordinary by Capcom's standards, but the latter Street Fighter Alpha 2 Gold is an absolute classic. In fact, our only niggle is that it seems to be standard policy not to attempt any sort of PAL optimisation for the European market, which means sizable black borders and a noticeable loss of speed. But then if you're a real Capcom fan, you really should have your Saturn modified top run import games anyway. It's entertaining stuff, but not really worth purchasing if you already own the far superior Street Fighter Alpha 2.



▲ Not one, not two, but three...



▲ ...yes, three classic Street Fighter titles!



▲ It's out at last! Er... we think.

Capcom's Classics



▲ 1943: superlative retro shoot 'em up.



▲ Pocket Fighter: full info next month.

Capcom's annual private show took place on June 29th in Osaka and SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE was in attendance as usual. The event is used to promote Capcom's forthcoming arcade and console titles to both trade and press, with this year's offerings ranging from state-of-the-art coin-op conversions to retro blasters.



Pocket Fighters has been finished for some time and looked mightily impressive, as it should do with the added power of Capcom's 4MB cart enhancing the game's 2D visuals. Expect massive coverage of this super deformed beat 'em up next month. Also on display was the the first Capcom Generations compilation, featuring arcade perfect ports of supreme shooters 1941 and 1943. But the highlight of the event was the appearance of Street Fighter Zero 3 (see page 26), Capcom's hotly awaited 2D beat 'em up sequel. With huge queues of avid Japanese gamers permanently glued to this cool coin-op, there was no denying the game's crowd-pulling potential.

Finally, Capcom also revealed a few minutes worth of footage of its next 3D arcade fighting game, the mysteriously monickered TechRomancer. Imagine a 3D version of CyberBots crossed with Virtual-On and you should have some idea of how hot this title could be. More news as we get it...



▲ Shocking! Street Fighter Alpha 3 rocks!

Cheap Games Here!

Following last month's news piece on Games Terminal, they were inundated with SSM readers clambering to get their hands on discounted Saturn titles. That being the case, we thought we'd keep you updated with some of their latest offers and clear up any confusion that may have arisen. Games Terminal has a selection of over 1500 new and second hand games available, many at greatly discounted prices for members. You can join across the 'net for a measly £5 at www.gamesterminal.com, or by telephoning 0870 606 0054. The membership fee is £12 if you join over the phone, but Games Terminal will administer the account for you, sorting out your adverts, swaps and purchases. Postage, packaging and delivery to your doorstep are completely FREE. Lazy slackers. Forthcoming releases include Shining Force III on July 17th and Deep Fear in September, available to members at the bargain basement price of £33.99. But hey, don't stop there. Introduce three friends to Games Terminal and you can claim £10 off a new game or a free gift.

Crowning Glory

SNK has revealed that King of Fighters '98 will be arriving in arcades this Winter. The latest in the company's popular series of 2D beat 'em ups sees the return of every single fighter from previous games plus a number of new faces to pummel. The most obvious addition is the All-American team, with each character using a combination of cool karate moves and sports skills.



There's no word on gameplay enhancements or new special moves as yet, but King of Fighters '98 does run on SNK's standard 2D arcade board so fans of the series already know what to expect. We'll have full KoF '98 coverage next issue.



▲ Okay, so these are pics from KoF '97...



▲ ...but next month we'll have '98 shots.

HMV CHARTS

Week Ending 26th June 1998

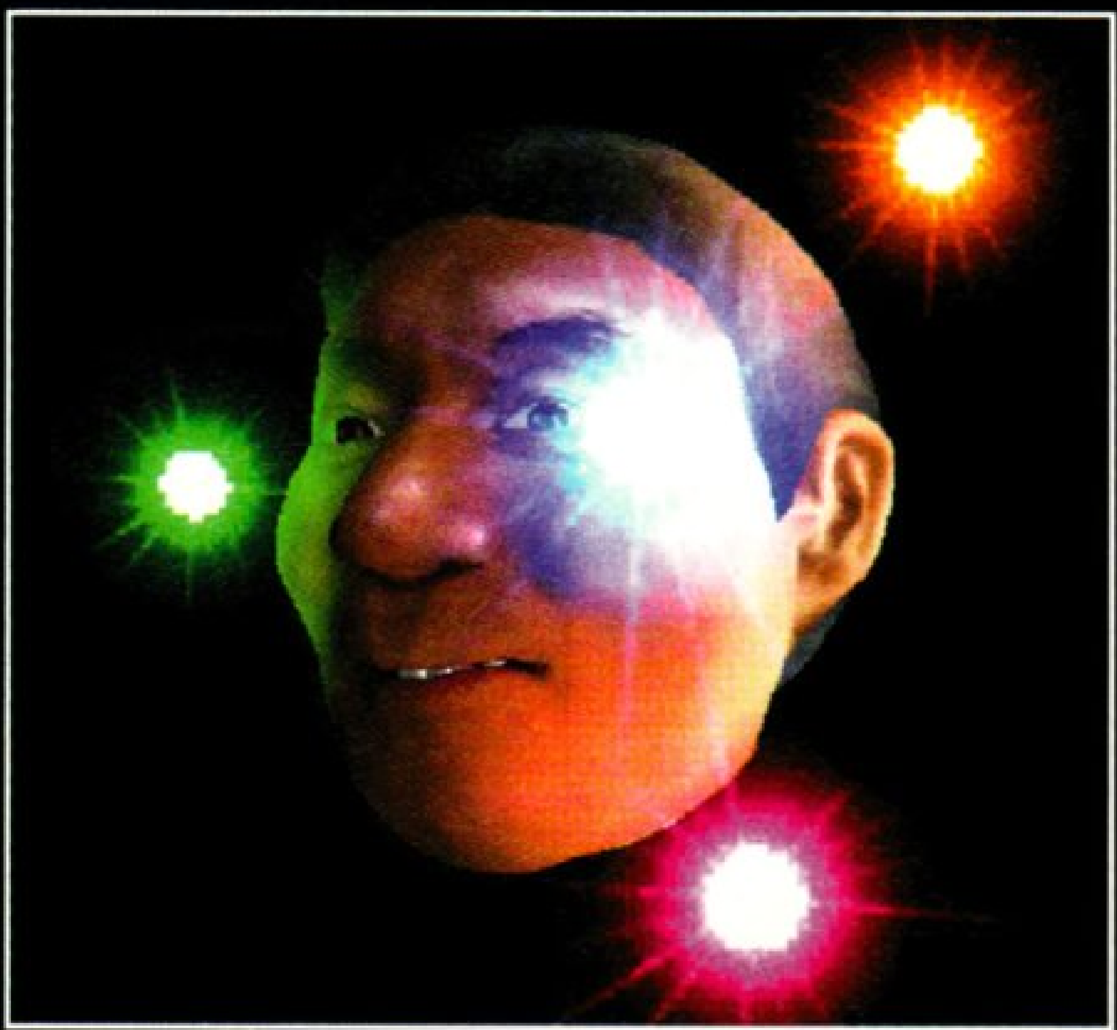
KNOW HMV · KNOW GAMES

Send us your top ten titles and you could win a free Saturn game! Post your choices to READER CHARTS, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 MILL HARBOUR, ISLE OF DOGS, LONDON E14 9TZ. We give away exclusive pre-production silver CD games to those who win! This month's winner is A Archer from East Ham.

	HMV CHARTS		READER CHARTS		SEGA PARK CHARTS
1	Burning Rangers	1	Panzer Dragoon Saga	1	Sega Rally 2
2	House of the Dead	2	Street Fighter Collection	2	Street Fighter EX 2
3	Panzer Dragoon	3	Last Bronx	3	Marvel vs Capcom
4	Resident Evil	4	Duke Nukem 3D	4	Virtua Striker 2: Version '98
5	Marvel Super Heroes	5	Capcom Generation	5	Marvel vs Capcom
6	Duke Nukem 3D	6	Samurai Shodown IV	6	Harley Davidson
7	FIFA '98	7	Thunderforce V	7	Metal Slug 2
8	Quake	8	Bomberman Wars	8	House of the Dead
9	Marvel Super Heroes	9	Sonic Jam	9	The Lost World: Jurassic Park
10	Sonic R	10	Dragon Force	10	Virtua Fighter 3

THE OFFICIAL SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

Coming Soon!



▲ Dreamcast is the future of Sega and we have BIG plans.



▲ Sega Saturn coverage will still be excessively important!

It's time for a change

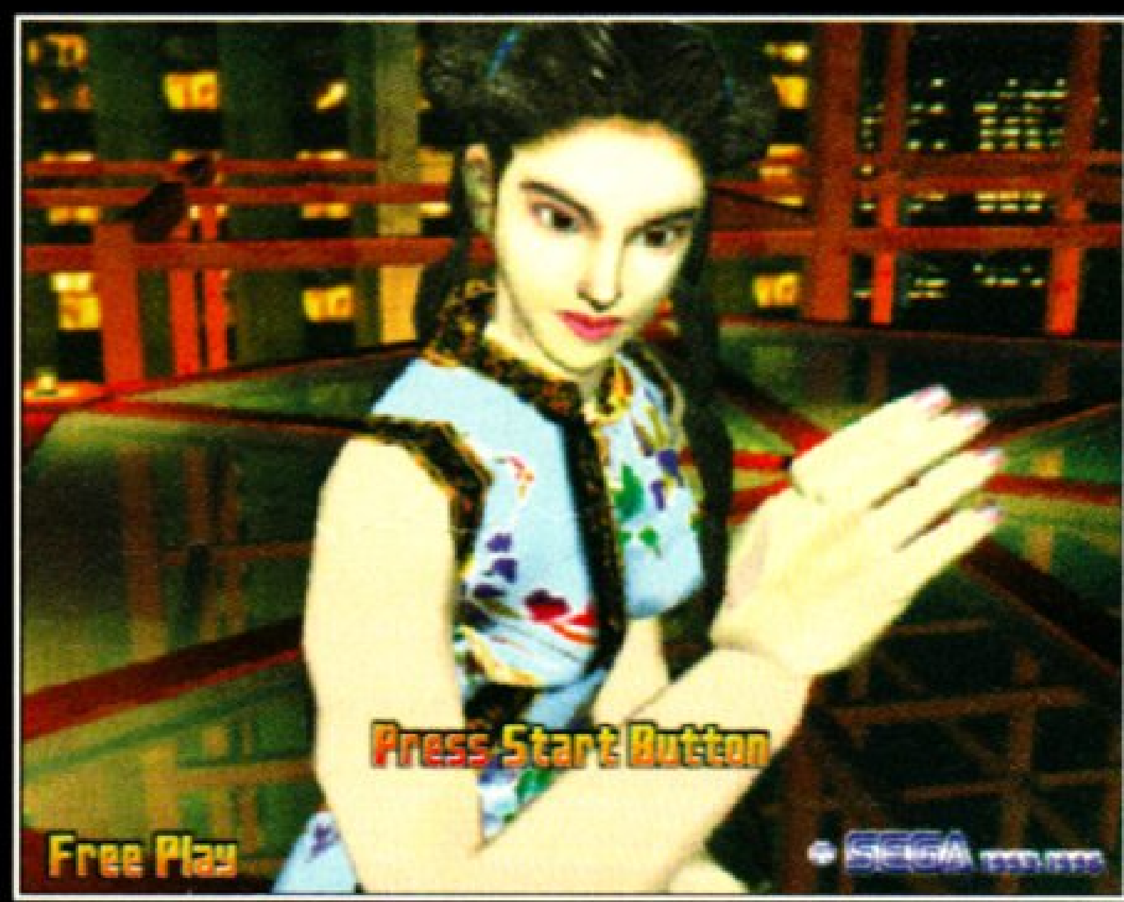
With every passing month, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE finds itself expanding its scope, covering the entire Sega Universe in all its videogame diversity. Despite the Saturn remaining the focus of the magazine, we've been moving into other areas - our close relationship with the Japanese AM arcade divisions allows us a level of access no other western magazine can match.

However, the announcement of the Dreamcast brings a whole new dimension to the magazine. As readers of the last issue know, Sega's new machine is the most exciting hardware launch in the history of videogames... and it's our duty to bring you unparalleled levels of coverage on everything related to this monumental new machine and its astounding software.

But can we do all of this justice with a title like SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE? We don't think so. Expect big changes to the magazine, coming soon. Anticipate a new look for the magazine, a more dynamic style... and a new name. Things aren't going to change overnight (or by next issue) - this is an evolution that's been in the planning stages since the beginning of the year - but we'll have a small preview of what to expect in next month's SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. Look out for it - it's going to be pretty hot.

It's going to be the beginning of a new era for Sega and its immensely loyal fanbase... and our overall aim is to have the magazine that will bring you the full majesty of the great times ahead. Personally, I can't wait...

Rich Leadbetter



▲ Continued unparalleled arcade coverage is guaranteed.

Dreamcast™

No.1 for DREAMCAST!

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

TWIX® GAMESPLAYER OF THE YEAR

Hit the brakes and power up with TWIX®

Win £1000 of software and peripherals! and a year's supply of Twix®*

Or the winning Sega Gamesplayer can bag a new Dreamcast on launch!

What's the Score?

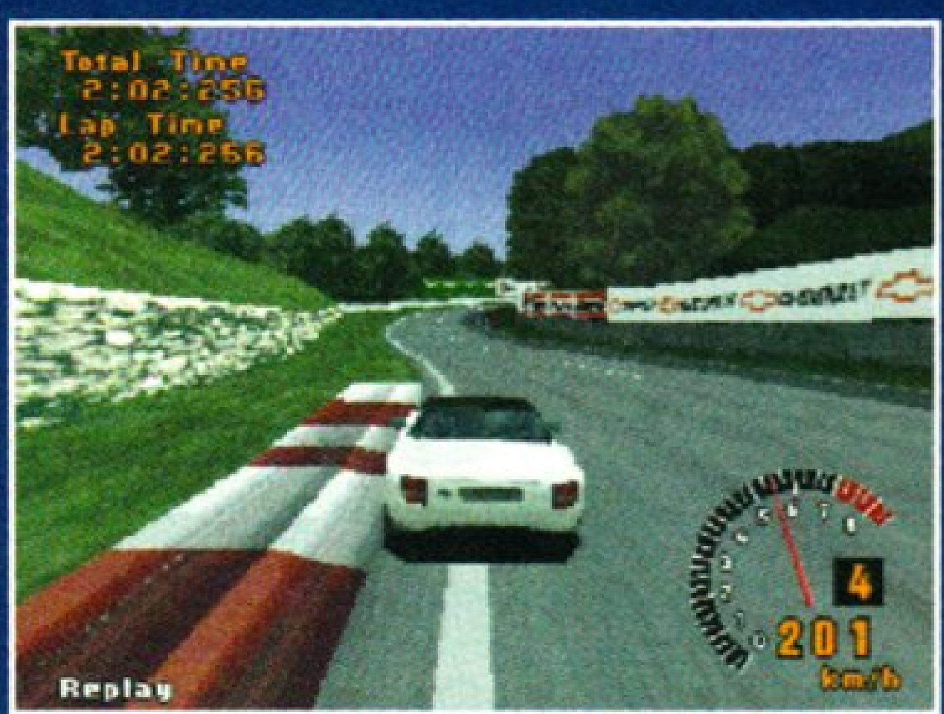
Here's your chance to enter TWIX Gamesplayer of the Year. The top scorers will be invited to London to take part in the final. To qualify, you have a choice of three games in which to achieve your best score, one for each of the major formats. You will be set a specific task linked to that game, details follow. Then jot your score onto the form below and whack it into the post. Easy.

SATURN - WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER



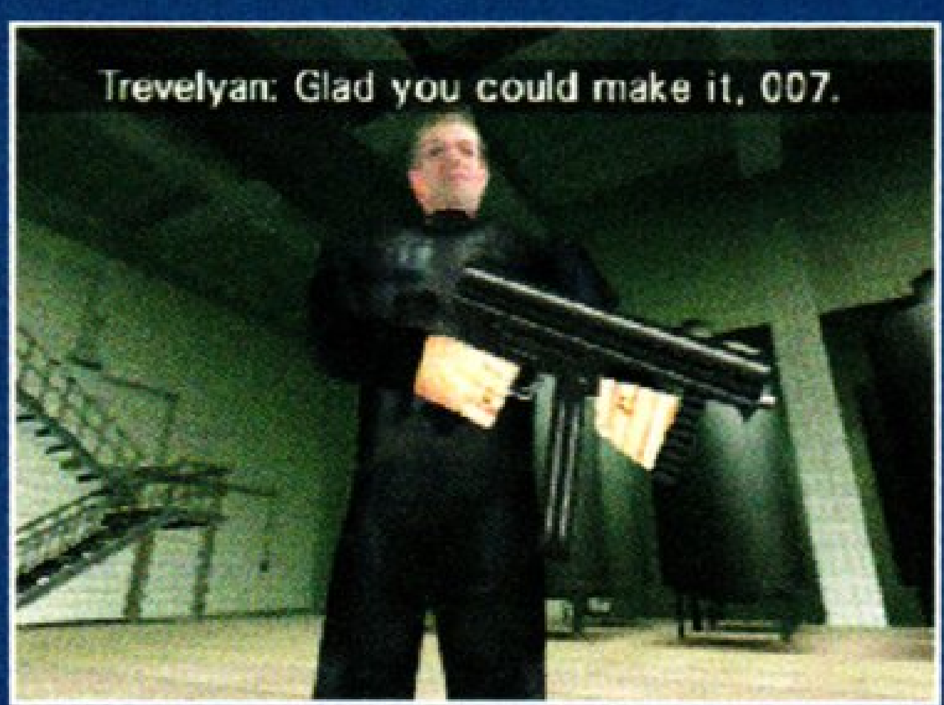
Playing as Crystal Palace in a ten minutes each way game against Arsenal, you must record your best score possible. It must be the default skill level too. Altogether now... One-nil, to the Ars-en-al.

PLAYSTATION - GRAN TURISMO



You have to play on Arcade Mode and on the Grand Valley East circuit. Complete three laps from a standing start using any car (but you must specify which vehicle you have used on the entry form) and the fastest time will win.

NINTENDO - GOLDENEYE



For the N64 owners, you must start on the Cradle Stage on any difficulty setting. And, with a fifteen minute time limit, you must get as many kills as possible. Cock the Hammer it's time for action!

THE FINAL: SATURDAY 24TH OCTOBER 1998

It's a well known fact that if you need gaming information, you turn to SSM. And we reckon that our knowledge rubs off on you, the readers, making our followers some of the best, most elite gamesplayers on the planet. Which is why we want to put you to the test.

YOUR THREE STEP GUIDE TO BECOMING A CHAMPION

1 - Set up your console and whichever game you're going to be competing with
2 - Play the game, enjoy a TWIX, read SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE
3 - Save any five TWIX wrappers and send them to us along with completed coupon to TWIX GAMESPLAYER OF THE YEAR 1998, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London, E14 9TZ

Rules

To enter is easy. But there are a few 'rules' that have to be adhered to in order to stand any chance of beefing up your games collection and perchance getting your hands on that all-powerful Dreamcast machine!

- Firstly, you have to be aged 21 or younger. Sorry to all the Grandad gamers out there, but that's the way the cookie crumbles
- You need to send in five TWIX wrappers (empty of course) with the completed coupon
- Entries must be received by 31ST AUGUST 1998
- All entries will be CAREFULLY VETTED, so no cheating. You may be telephoned to verify scores or times submitted
- There will be a final on each format - N64, Sega Saturn and Playstation. 8 people will be selected to play in each of the finals, to be held at Virgin Megastore in Oxford Street, London on 24 October 1998. The 8 finalists on each format will consist of 5 of you who have sent us your best times/scores on the entry form below, the 2 finalists qualifying through the regional heats and last year's winner
- Promoters decision is final, no cash alternative
- The competition is open to all UK residents except employees and families of the promoter and EMAP, their agents and any one connected with the competition
- No responsibility is accepted for entries which are lost, delayed or damaged in the post
- The finalists will be notified by post by September 14th
- If you are under 16 an adult must be able to accompany you to the final
- Prize includes standard rate return rail fare to the Final in London
- Finalists' names will be available from the competition address to those sending an SAE marked 'results' after the closing date
- Finalists may be used in future publicity material/ promotional activity
- The promoter is Mars Confectionery, a division of Mars UK Limited, Dundee Road, Slough SL1 4JX

TWIX GAMESPLAYER OF THE YEAR ENTRY FORM

Entries must be received by 31ST AUGUST 1998

NAME ______________________ AGE ______________________

ADDRESS ____

____

PHONE NUMBER ______________________ BEST TIME/SCORE ______________________

If aged under 16, please ask a parent or guardian to read and then sign the following: I verify that the above details are correct and hereby give my permission for the above named person to take part in the final of the TWIX Gamesplayer of the Year 1998, should they be selected.

SIGNED ....

GAME/CONSOLE

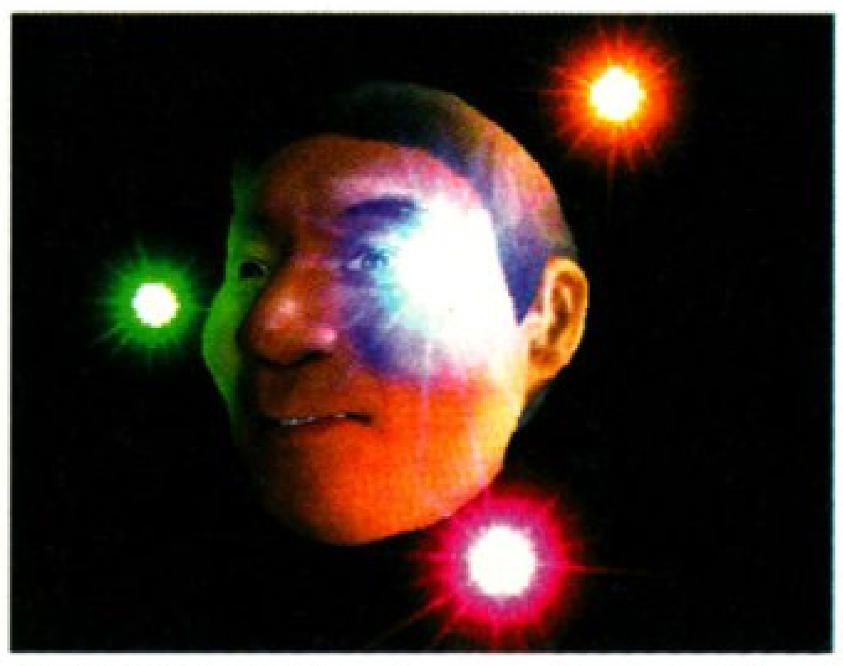
- ☐ Playstation/ Gran Turismo
- Vehicle __________
- ☐ Saturn/World League Soccer
- ☐ N64/Goldeneye

check future issues and local press for details of regional heats at Virgin Megastores in Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle & York

TWIX® A BREAK FROM THE NORM — Virgin MEGASTORES

* That's a TWIX bar for every day of the year!





▲ Multiple lighting is no problem at all!

▼ The Iri-San demo starts with the president breaking free of a 2D image.



▼ Ace fire effects abound in the demo!



Dreamcast Exclusive

IRI-SAN: THE FULL STORY

All-new images of Sonic Team's New Challenge demo! ■ New effects never seen before revealed on these pages! ■ Sega's top producers reveal their thinking behind this stunning program!



THIS DEMO WAS A WELL-PLANNED EXERCISE

"It was fun to make objects on the Dreamcast machine. The 3D data was given to me three days before the unveiling day of the Dreamcast so I had to get things done within that time, but the reason why my task was made that much easier was due to the fact that the machine has most of the graphical capabilities already built in. And unlike the previous hardware (Saturn), the modelling capabilities on the Dreamcast are much simpler, allowing us to devote more time to imagination. The feel of realism is just that much greater now and the amount of new capabilities that's within our repertoire now can only mean good things.

"As we can now do what we couldn't do before, we want to see how much of an impact we can have on the users. After that, if we have another demo do to do, I'll like to use a beautiful model..."

Naoto Oshima worked with Yuji Naka on the epoch-making Sonic series and was a key project member on NiGHTS and Burning Rangers.

This issue, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE's unparalleled trans-global contacts have allowed us to scoop more images of the stunning Iri-San demo, as shown at the Sega New Challenge Conference. This demo shows off some of Dreamcast's astounding 3D effects, and with the aid of these pics - taken directly from a development kit - you'll see these features in perfect clarity!

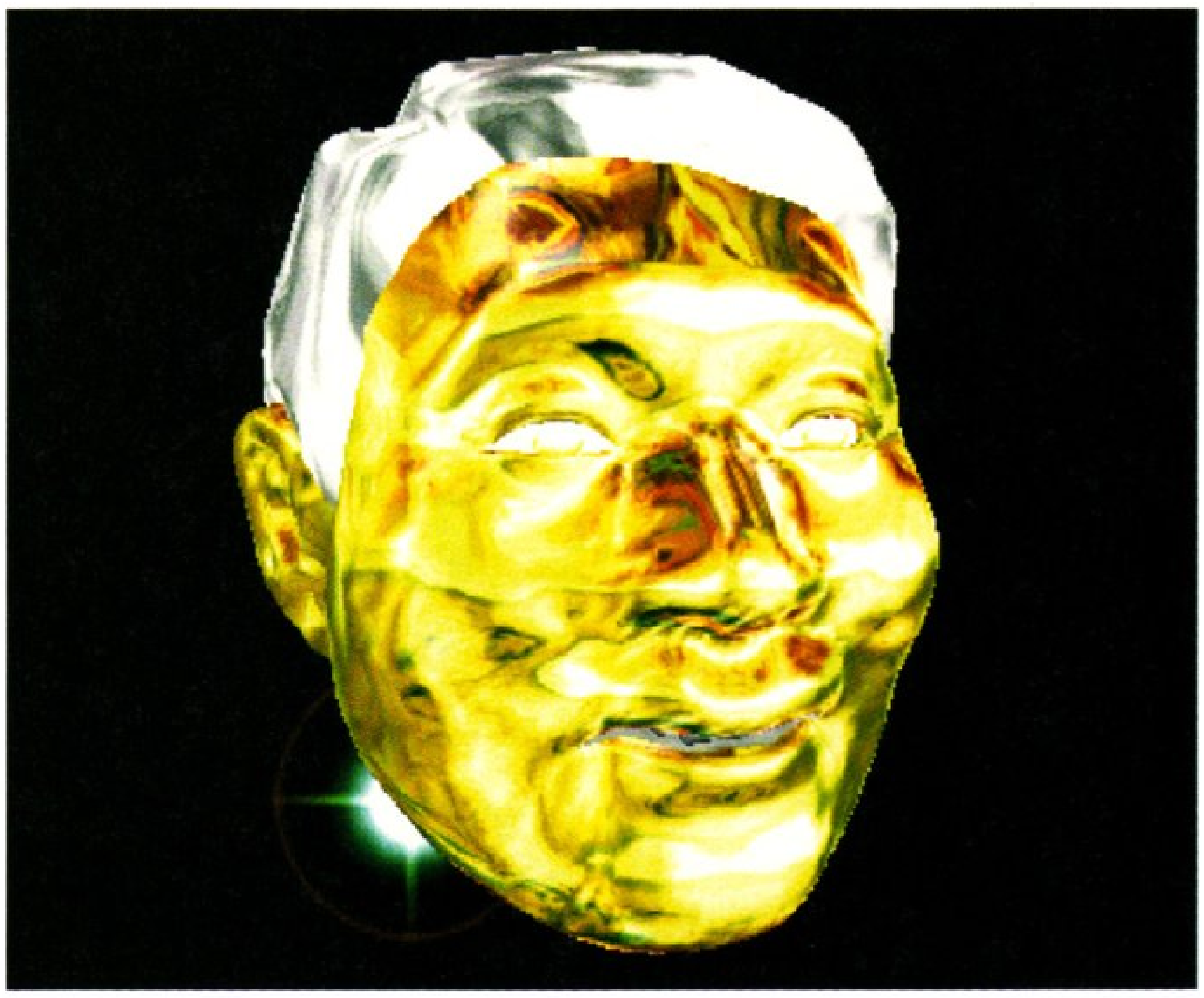
Last issue, we barely had space (or indeed time) to really go into detail on the software that Sega used to demonstrate the raw power of Dreamcast... and there is a very BIG story to tell both with the Iri-San and the Tower of Babel demos! This month, we're proud to present the full story on the 3D capabilities of the new hardware, replete with selected words of wisdom from Sega R&D supremos, who recently gave voice to



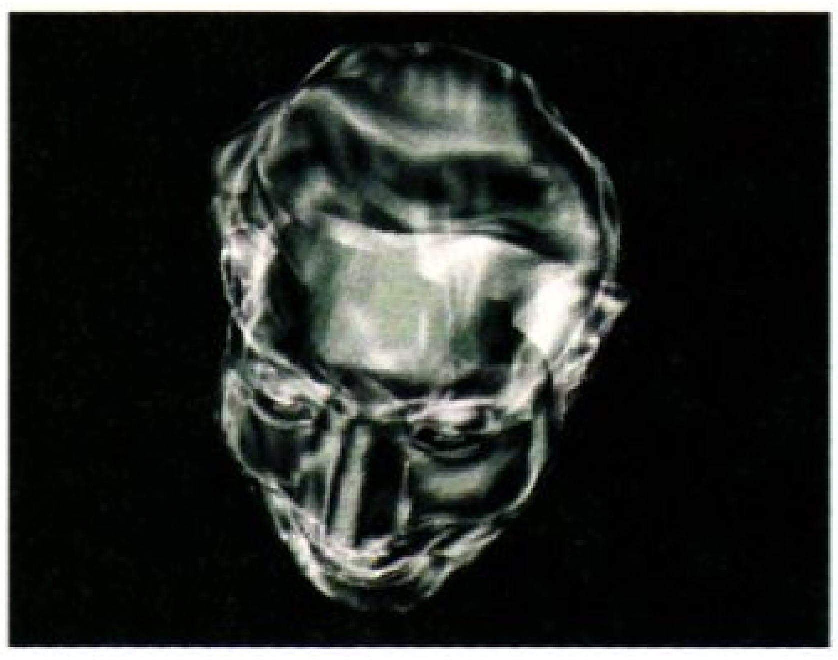
▲ This is the most stunning demo section!



▲ Environment mapping on Iri-San's face!



▲ Iri-San becomes a gold mask... Dreamcast's hardware does this with stunning ease.





their opinions within the pages of the respected Japanese edition of Sega Saturn Magazine.

Elsewhere within this issue's Dreamcast news you'll get the scoop on what was shown behind closed doors at the recent E3 show. Sega of America worked for six weeks (almost twice the amount of time spent on Iri-San...) preparing four technology demos of Dreamcast's capabilities and swore us to silence until well after the show was over. We're doing our best to grab hold of screenshots from these astounding demonstrations in time for the next issue of the magazine... just to let you know that what's been revealed to date really is just the tip of the iceberg. In the meantime, enjoy the greatest, most in-depth Dreamcast coverage in the Western world!



SEGA'S LEGENDARY PRODUCER TALKS IRI-SAN

"'Mr Irimajiri normally can't be moved!' was the theme of this unique demo. He is usually unflinching in his everyday dealing with business so Mr Hirose suggested that maybe to raise the spirits a little at the unveiling, it might be an idea to make a demo using Mr Irimajiri to show what the Dreamcast machine can do.

"Even though I've been at AM for a long time, I feel that the Dreamcast is a machine of great magnitude. Up to now, with every new machine, there's been an improvement from sprites to polygons and CG. However, I feel that we've passed that stage where we think that the more real a game is, the better it becomes. I think with Dreamcast, it's not just a matter of realism but about 'sur-realism' and where fun, enjoyment, and the imagination of the creator should flourish.

"After the demo was created, I felt that the hardware hadn't been pushed yet, and considering a demo of this quality was created in such a short time, the Dreamcast machine has a lot of potential. There's some work to be done and I know we're going to be very busy from now until November 20 but we're working hard and we're well ahead of schedule and most of the final hardware is finished. Please wait for the Dreamcast."

Tetsuya Mizuguchi is one of Sega's most celebrated producers. He is the man behind Sega Rally, its sequel and Manx TT SuperBike, to name just three of his successful coin-ops. Recently he was drafted into the consumer department from AM Annex to lend his genius to the Dreamcast project.



▲ You guessed it, he's the firestarter.



▲ Sonic's Dreamcast debut - right here!



SUPER DESIGNER YUJI NAKA!

"On this Iri-San project, Mr Matsumoto dealt with the software, Mr Oshima the animation and the modelling whilst I was the head designer. We had a lot of fun playing around with Mr Irimajiri's face as he is our supreme boss and on the side we even took a picture of my face (Naka) to play with!

"We had three weeks to come up with the demo but we didn't need the time. We can't take all the credit as we got help from Michael Arias at SoftImage and the fact is Dreamcast has most of the tools already. We spent about a week experimenting what we could and could not do with regards to human expressions...

"This demo shows CG that can only be done on this machine, but we also want the consumer to have an enjoyable experience as well as being wooed by the technical aspects. We want you to get ready for the new world!"

Yuki Naka is the head of CS3, the consumer research and development department inside Sega of Japan, which includes the legendary Sonic Team.



WE REALLY DID MANAGE TO DO IT IN A VERY SHORT TIME

"All the final data was given to me two days before the deadline and I did all the modelling in this allotted time. I did have to try hard as I was doing the modelling along with the rehearsal but I did manage to create a product that I would be happy to call satisfactory.

"After we made this demo, I personally wanted to make a Burning Rangers style game. When we made Burning Rangers on the Saturn there were many technical aspects that we had to work around but with this new hardware, we don't need to spend as much time as it's easier to do now, so I feel that we can devote more time into creating a superior deeper game. From a programmer's point of view, this is a great machine."

Takuya Matsumoto is considered an awesome programming talent within Sega's internal research and development departments, a reputation well-earned after hard work on the technically groundbreaking NiGHTS and Burning Rangers projects.

FOG

This feature creates the illusion of mist as seen on Aoi's stage in VF3 (and far too frequently on N64 games). It changes the contrast balance between the 'closer' and the 'further' objects whilst adding a white effect. During the demo this was used on the section where Iri-San breathes fire, but this isn't the most conventional use for the effect.

ALPHA BLENDING

An awesome transparency effect. Dreamcast can place translucent polygons over each other, accurately calculating the shift in colour as the polys are stacked one on top of the other. Obviously when Iri-San turns into glass in the demo, this is the technique used!

MIP-MAPPING

What's the point in calculating the full quality of a texture map if the polygon is so small it's barely going to be seen? Answer: there is no point. What mip-mapping does is to reduce texture map calculations on the polygons that are "far away".

LET THERE BE LIGHT

More convincing 3D effects can be generated with super-realistic lighting. The Dreamcast PowerVR graphics chip achieves all of this without any performance loss. These exclusive pictures show the effect of light sources playing across Iri-San's face. Because it's so realistic, you can tell exactly where the light source itself is positioned, even though it's not actually displayed on-screen!



▲ The light source is below, to the right.

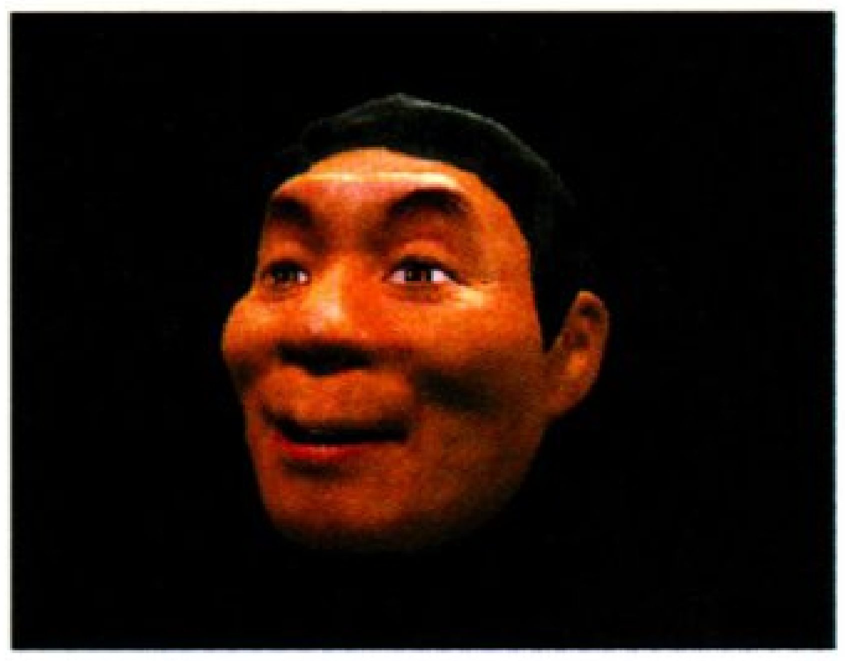


▲ Lighting from right in front of Iri-San!





▲ Guess the light source! Yup, it's shining onto Iri-San's forehead...





▲ Mr Irimajiri's image on a flat 2D plane begins to stretch, pulling free into three dimensions!



▲ Iri-San breaks free, turning from flat 2D photograph into full-on Dreamcast CG character.



▲ Here he is, a fully realised 3D model, with a stunning realistic range of facial expressions.



▲ Coloured orbs spin around Iri-San, lighting up areas of his face... it's amazing to behold!



▲ Suddenly Iri-San turns into a solid metal construction with gold and silver reflective finishing!



▲ More specular effects as Iri-San becomes a transparent, glass-like spinning structure. Astounding!



▲ He's changing again, collapsing and morphing into a small ball-like shape... what's going on?



▲ Now he's a golf ball! Notice the brilliant bump-mapping effects on the little ball itself!



▲ After being teed off, Iri-San returns with a hole in his head ready to receive the flying golf ball.



▲ Now he's descending into a cityscape, the Dreamcast logo projected onto Iri-San's smiling face!



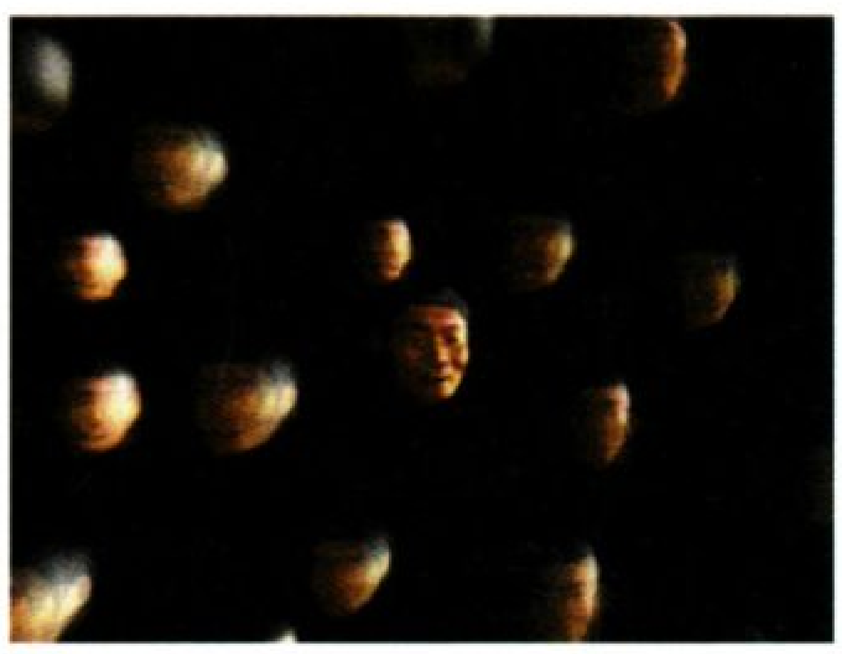
▲ Iri-San spins around, annihilating the cityscape with a stunning pyrotechnic display.



▲ Sonic spins around Iri-San's head - a small trademark touch added by Sonic Team coders.



▲ Iri-San delivers a final message of hope for Sega, his face zooming towards the camera, filling the screen.



▲ The camera pans back, revealing multiple Iri-San heads flying at speed around the screen. It all looks rather splendid.



▲ What's this? A vast flume of flame appearing beneath Iri-San's head? What's he been eating?



▲ The demo ends with the Sega president being propelleled out of shot via pure neck-mounted rocket power!

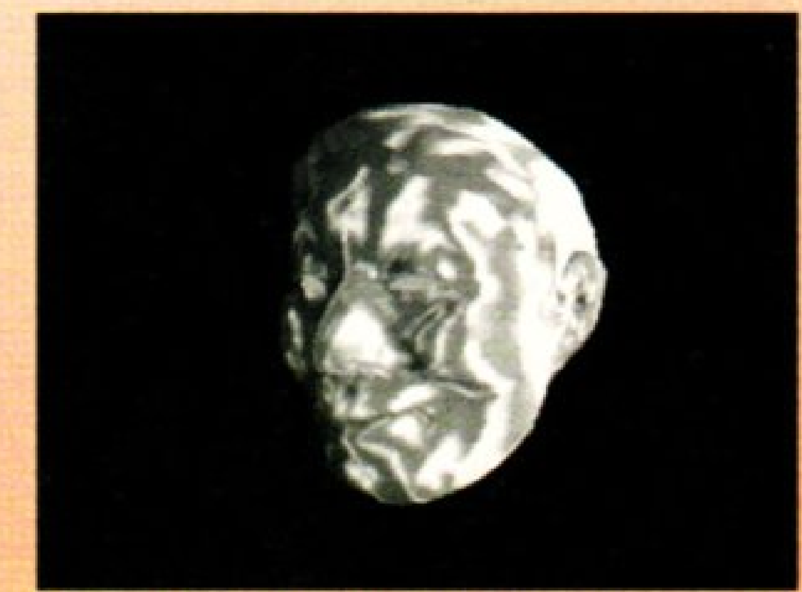
NEVER SEEN BEFORE EFFECTS!
Here's a bit of an exclusive treat. These pictures show effects that the Iri-San demo was programmed to produce, but were curiously left out from the final cut - that's right, these pics have never seen the light of day outside of Sega's R&D labs! Essentially they reveal texturing modes the Dreamcast hardware is capable of producing in addition to the glass and reflective metal effects shown to date.







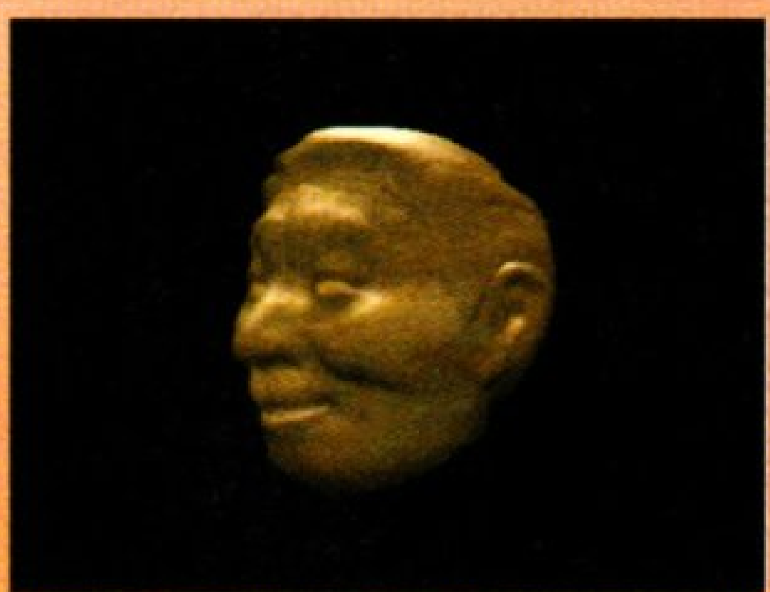
▲ Sandstone and silver effects... not added to the final Iri-San demo...



▲ ... But it's still amazing and we show it all right here, right now!



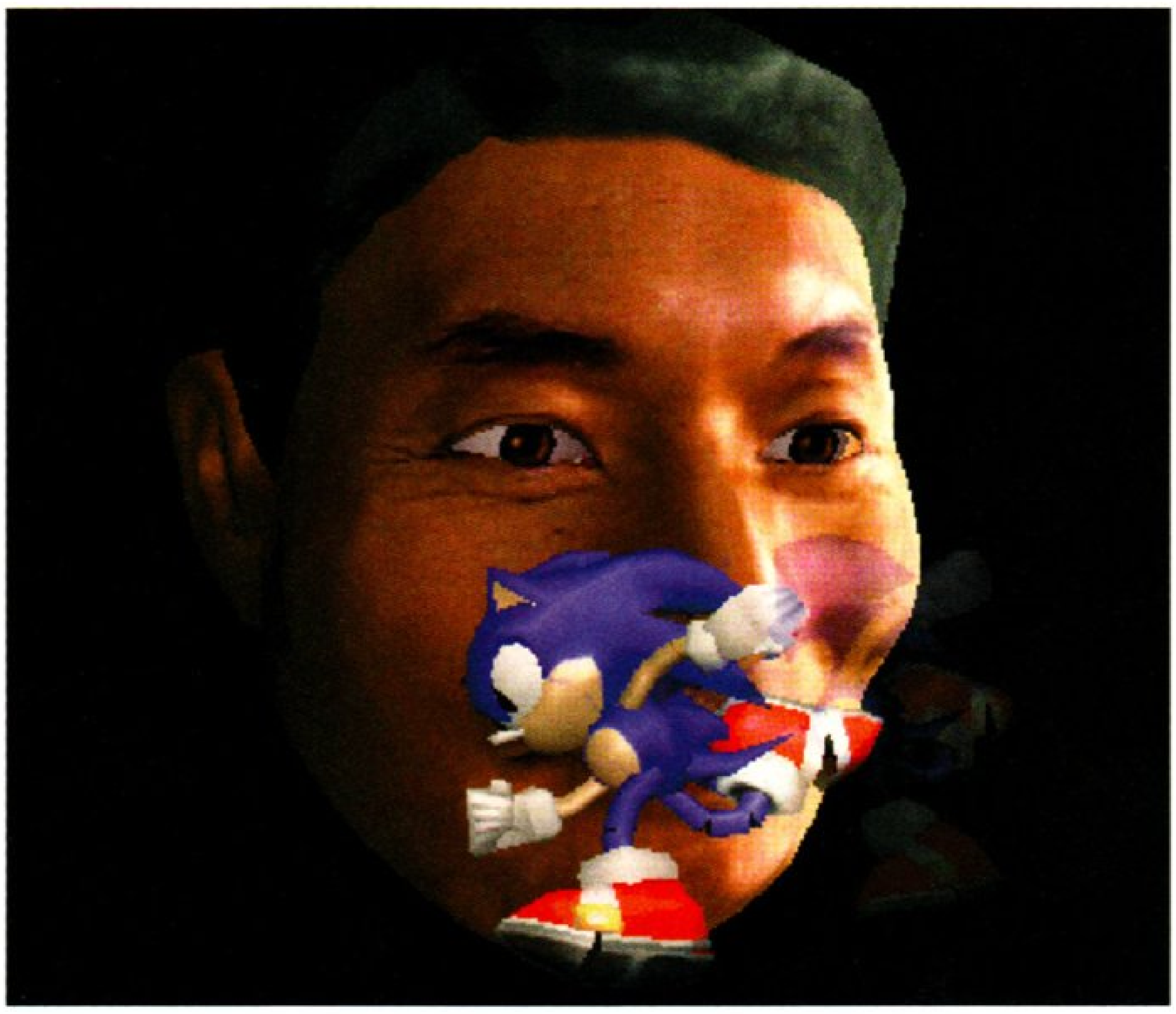
▲ An effect not seen in the actual Iri-San demo, but revealed here...



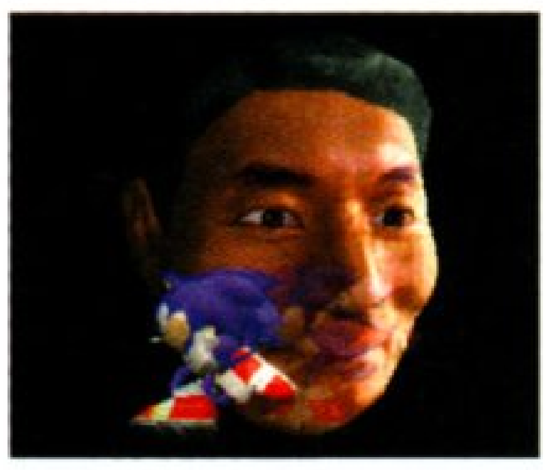
▲ ... More evidence of Dreamcast's amazing texturing and lighting power!

Sonic's Back!

Since Yuji Naka's Sonic Team are involved with the Iri-San demo, part of the action shows a full 3D rendition of Sonic running around the Sega president's head. Although little more than a nice touch, Sonic himself looks absolutely spot-on, just as he should look in 3D! If he looks like this in the forthcoming 3D Sonic Dreamcast title, we'll be most happy indeed...









TRI LINEAR FILTERING

Any unfiltered texture maps look extremely blocky close up (Saturn House of the Dead any one?). What tri linear filtering does is to smooth the appearance of polygons at this range. N64 games tend to look super-blurry as a result, but Dreamcast's more detailed textures and higher resolution will give a look on a part or better than say, Unreal or Quake2 on a high-end PC with 3D card.

BUMP MAPPING

Flat polygons, even with the most intricate of texture maps, are still flat. Bump mapping is a feature that can add dimples or ridges to polygons, making for a far more realistic and stunning effect. When Iri-San's head turns into a golf ball, that's bump mapping at work.

E-MOTION CAPTURE
Shoichiro Irimajiri had his head extensively digitised and rendered in full 3D by the accomplished 3D modellers at the Sonic Team. But this wasn't the extent of the team's efforts. In order to add the realistic movement to the face, Mr Irimajiri paid a visit to AM2's motion capture experts, who strapped him into this device in order to capture his mannerisms. It all worked rather well - after revealing the demo at the New Challenge Conference, the Dreamcast rendition remained on-screen behind the Sega president as he gave his address, miming to his speech!





DREAMCAST'S 3D POWER!

The 3D capabilities of Dreamcast are unprecedented - even a top-of-the range Pentium2 PC with Voodoo2 graphics card would have difficulties matching Sega's console due the many bottlenecks in the PC architecture. In the black boxes on these pages you'll find descriptions of Dreamcast's major 3D functions... along with translations!

ENVIRONMENT MAPPING

Another vast improvement in 3D performance is afforded thanks to environment mapping. Lighting and textures can be added to a 3D model in order to make it look more in tune with its surrounding environment. For example, the globes of light spinning around Iri-San's head use environment mapping as does the effect where the Dreamcast logo plays over his face.

SPECULAR EFFECTS

This is another all-new lighting effect, allowing for the metallic effect you see on the Iri-San pictures on these pages. This is impossible with current lighting techniques, whereas specular effects give coders full control over contrast, lighting and colour. Read the E3 demo reports for MORE lighting effect news!

Yu Suzuki Talks Dreamcast

E3 DEMO #1: POLYGONS

Sega of America's first E3 Dreamcast demo depicted a 3D world, of a lush green landscape next to a lake, with a boat house on stilts on the shore. A thin layer of cloud covers the area. Part of the aim of this demo was to see the focus on the waterline, which hugged the shore pixel-perfectly. The water itself was composed of thousands of undulating polygons, with stunning translucency effects. Beneath the water, pillars were rendered, distorting according to the movement of the water.

A major point of this demo was to illustrate Dreamcast's rendering power - most 3D accelerators draw the scene in several passes, or layers, before displaying the image. The new Sega hardware does it all in one pass.

Another aspect of the demo concerned distance. At one point, the demo is taken far up into the air, looking through the cloud layer. You can see EVERYTHING here, there is no clipping, or fogging whatsoever. Conversely, you could also go under water, looking up to see the world viewed as it would be with the appropriate distortion effects, alpha-blending being used for the spectacular visuals.



▲ This spectacular Dreamcast demo was done in ten days by three developers!

Sega's most renowned producer, Yu Suzuki, has broken his silence with regard to the Dreamcast. It's a fairly well known fact that the celebrated AM2 boss is lending his awesome expertise to the new machine project, and Sega President Shoichiro Irimajiri told SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE last month that Suzuki is also deeply involved with the new Naomi arcade hardware, which is based on Dreamcast technology.

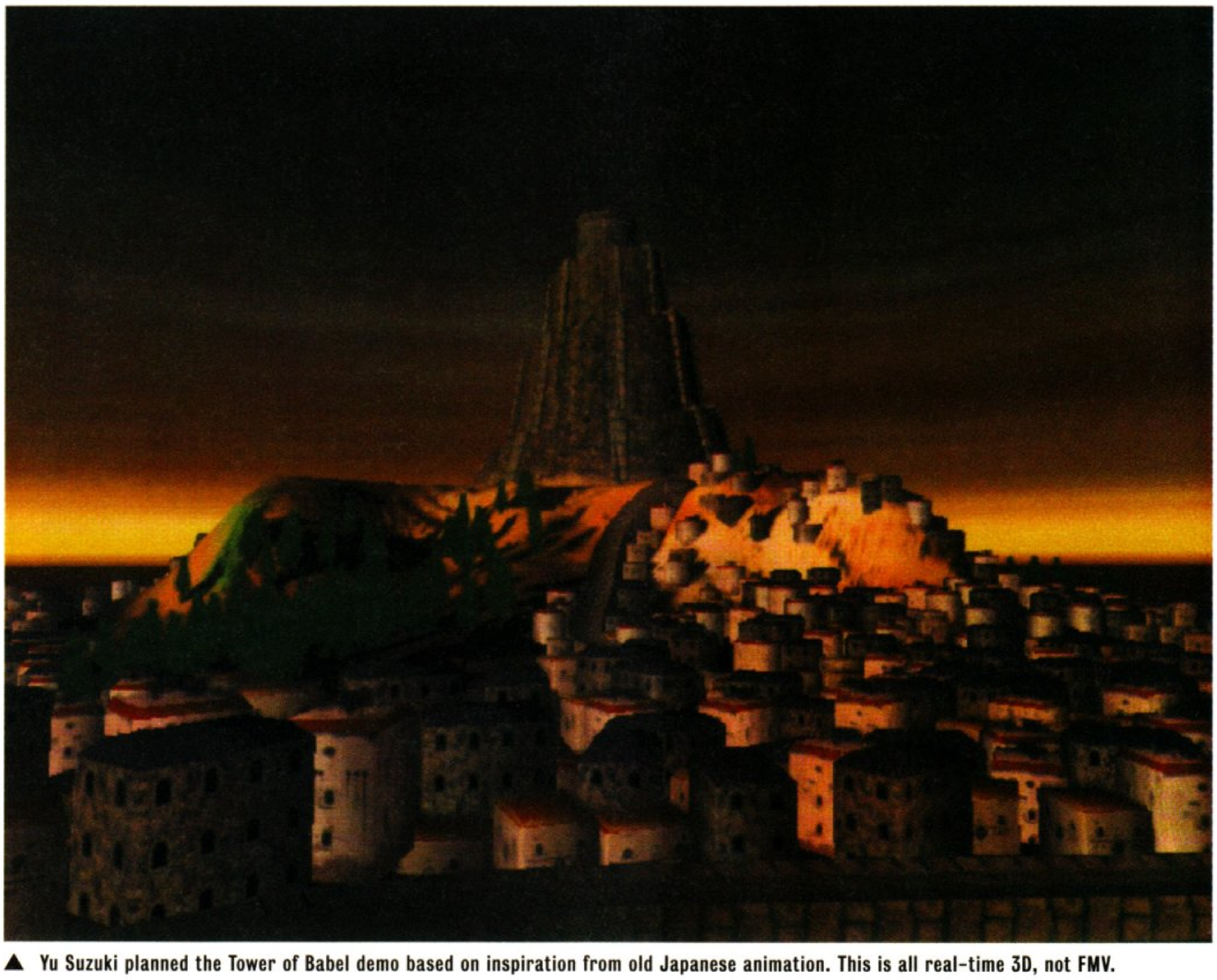
Mr Suzuki spoke to the Japanese press recently about work he put into the famous Tower of Babel demo which was used to highlight Dreamcast's polygon pushing capabilities at the Sega New Challenge Conference in May.

Unfortunately, Sega of Japan is

E3 DEMO #2: TEXTURES

Demo Two takes us into a richly detailed room with a portrait of Sonic the Hedgehog on the wall. Taking centre-stage here is a world globe, morphing into an alpha-blended purple swirling mist. Amazingly, you could see through the globe. Additionally, you could closely examine the walls of the room - the closer you got, the more detailed the wallpaper became - there was no blurring or fuzziness a la N64. With Dreamcast, artists can render textures at up to 1024x1024 pixels (even larger than twice the screen resolution!). The room also featured a wooden bunk bed, with ornately textured woodwork. After that you zoomed in on the lace top-sheet of the bed, the view altering to reveal that the entire room was still being rendered too!

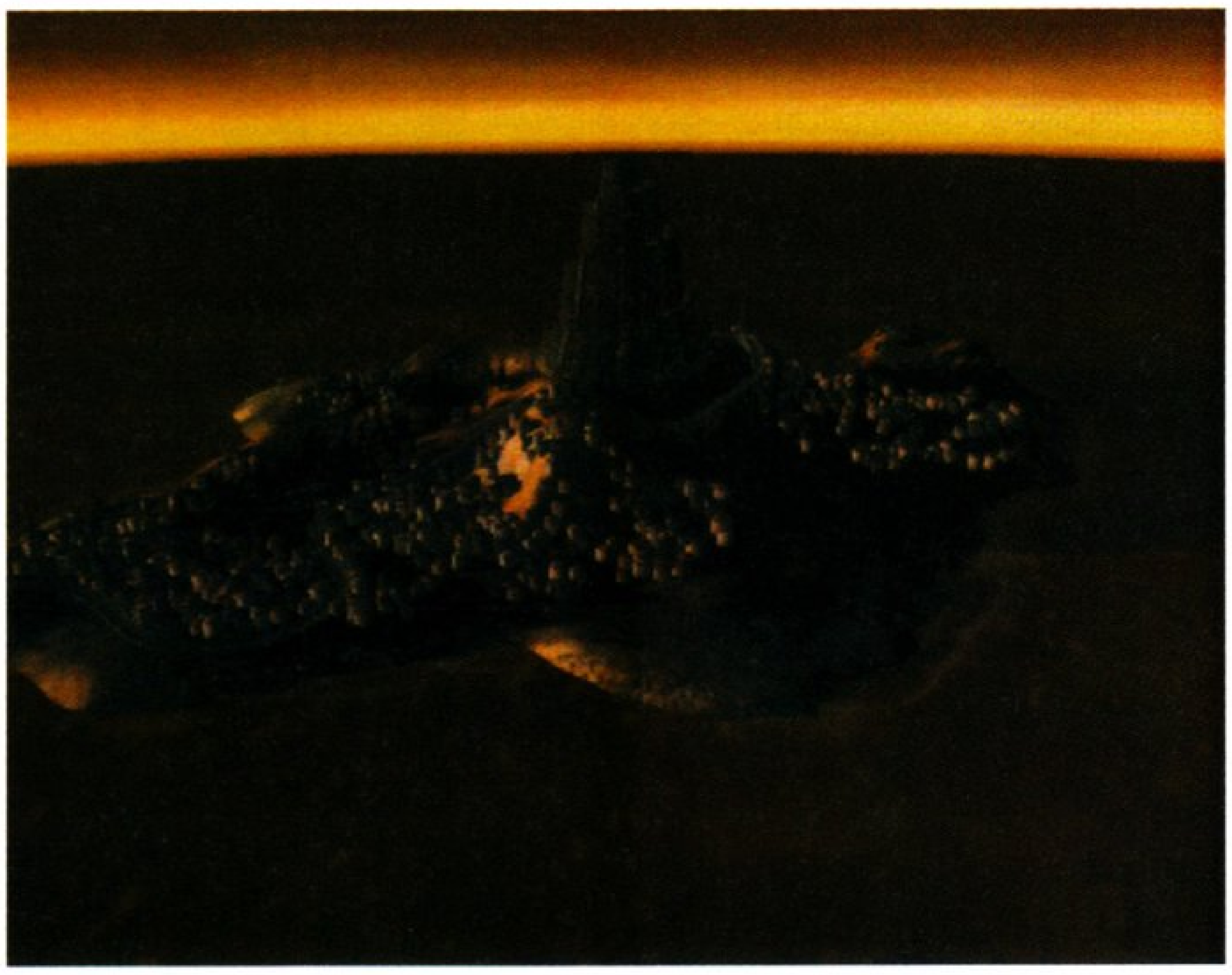
Also in the room was a bowl of fruit. But this was a very important bowl of fruit - this polygon construction accounted for 100,000 polygons per second, on a par with the PlayStation's top level of 3D performance... and this was just one detail in the overall room!



▲ Yu Suzuki planned the Tower of Babel demo based on inspiration from old Japanese animation. This is all real-time 3D, not FMV.



▲ The swooping camera angles on Tower of Babel take you above the entire landscape.



▲ The whole island, rendered in real-time 3D. No clipping, no fogging, just raw 3D power!

not keen on releasing any more images of the demo in action - which is a great shame as you haven't seen some of the more spectacular camera angles, or the sheer amount of detail. See those buildings you can see so far away in the screenshots? In the full three minute demo, you're swooping through the streets, between those buildings... and the detail level there is remarkably high - truly this is an incredible achievement.

THE TEN DAY DEMO

Speaking about the time allotted to producing to the demo, he said "This demonstration started off when I was asked 'Could you make something for the unveiling day?' and we started work on the Monday the week before the unveiling day... I chose to do Babel's Tower because I'm a fan of 'Eight Man' and 'Babel Niseii' (old famous Japanese animations). I did the roughs and the storyboard myself to set the image. From that day, it took ten days. The team consisted of one designer and two programmers and with this small amount of personnel, we made this demo."

As for the high quality of the Tower demo, Mr Suzuki was full of praise for the ease of use of the Dreamcast development libraries: "If we used a CG artist and asked him to do something like this, it would have cost from 10,000,000 to 20,000,000 yen [between £50,000 to £90,000] for three minutes but we managed to do this without any preparation. The Dreamcast is a lot easier to programme, as it has almost everything in place, and can be understood even if you're not involved in the art world."

Of course the machine is better than Model 3... We wanted to produce stress-free conversions



▲ AM2's boss Yu Suzuki is deeply involved in the Dreamcast and Naomi projects at Sega.

GETTING TECHNICAL

But how much is the Dreamcast pushed in the Tower of Babel demo? Does the machine really reach anywhere near its 3D limits?

"If this demo was running, say, a 1,000,000 polygons per second, then the machine is capable of producing three times this amount with ease. To make the machine run at its fullest capacity, it would take a lot of time and effort but if we were to push it, Dreamcast would be able to handle 3,000,000 to 3,500,000 polygons per second. But we're still yet to see the Model 3 board do this."

But can Dreamcast REALLY better Model 3? Sega Research and Development Managing Director Hideki Sato explained in pretty simple terms that it could in last month's issue, and for the doubters that remain, here's Yu Suzuki's assessment.

"Of course the machine is better than Model 3. When we were thinking about the Dreamcast, one thing that we wanted to make sure of was that when we converted games from Model 3 to the Dreamcast it would be stress free. So I feel that we've created a machine that has managed to achieve our aim. The Dreamcast is indeed a machine that does specialise in 3D but this doesn't mean that it's not capable of 2D either. If we change the Z variable to 0, then we can make 2D. So as the Dreamcast doesn't have to calculate the Z value, in theory this mean that the Dreamcast is capable of even greater 2D. One thing that I do want to say is that instead of me saying how amazing this machine is, I'd rather everybody see for themselves how great Dreamcast is."

E3 DEMO #3: ANIMATION

Now we enter another room, with a blazing fire heating a stove, on top of which is cooking pot. The main focus here is on the particle system, with animated flames on the fire and the steam rising from the stove. With this demo you could see the scene in wireframe if you so chose, showing that the fire consisted of 200 polygons, all individually textured to look like fire - this wasn't just one polygon with a fire texture map. Additionally, as the water boiled in the pot, steam rose, and again this was all an intricately animated series of polygons! Amazing stuff...

E3 DEMO #4: LIGHTING

Picture a room with a waterfall in it, flowing into a basin. Specular lighting is used to pick out the small waves on the water's surface (and can also be used for reflective metal effects), but the real highlight of this demo is the new, so-called Modifier Volume, which is a hardware technique that takes light and "hugs" it over an area of polygons. The main example here showed light coming in through the room's window, passing over the waterfall, lighting the floor and wall in succession - almost like a translucent drawbridge.

This technique has many applications, for example, hydrating parched surfaces of ground with a flood of water. But the real reason behind the secrecy behind these demos is the fact that Dreamcast is the first 3D system to make use of this feature, yup, it ain't even in Model 3!

NEXT MONTH



It's all about quality... and that's what SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE prides itself on. Despite the less-than-favourable state of the Saturn market, it's our pledge to keep the excitement alive... but at the same time giving you the greatest in 128-bit Dreamcast coverage.

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE SEPTEMBER 1998 ISSUE OUT AUGUST 12

Dear Newsagent,

In the great penalty shoot-out of life, one magazine stands firm - proudly fixing the opposition with a steely gaze, defiantly saving penalties of disinformation, firing its own shots bravely into the top-corner of the information net. Strong at the back, creative in midfield and decisive up front - save me a copy of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE.

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SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE continues to "bring home the bacon" with the most exciting Sega-based activities in the whole Omniverse! We're talking about the greatest range of excellent wares yet seen in this publication... like the following, for example...

* DREAMCAST DATA SECOND TO NONE!

All the latest info on the world's most powerful games system! The most in-depth Dreamcast coverage continues in the country's only dedicated Sega magazine! Next month we'll get our hands on the VMS mini-system and we're aiming to print some amazing new screenshots as well...

* DEEP FEAR: THE SHOWCASE

Sega's answer to Resident Evil is fully exposed as SSM rolls out its full-on Showcase coverage, leading up to the review in the subsequent issue.

* ENTER... THE POCKET FIGHTERS!

Capcom's latest game to use the 4MB RAM cart comes out soon in Japan... we'll have unparalleled coverage of this cutesy little number! It's (dare we say it) COOL!

* RADIANT SILVERGUN: THE SKINNY!

Look, it's just the best shooting game on the Saturn that's all... we reveal everything you need to know next issue and... yes - we review this stunning title as only we can.

* ULTIMATE TIPS!

We continue apace with our Shining Force 3 and Riven guides plus we also give you tips to help you overcome the Japanese text in Castlevania X - and you can't beat that, can you?

* EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

AM2... Treasure... even the President of Sega Enterprises himself! SSM pledges to continue its series of excellent interviews with the people that matter in the world of Sega.

* AND PERHAPS INEVITABLY MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Our plans for the evolution of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE will be fully revealed in the next issue... need we say more?

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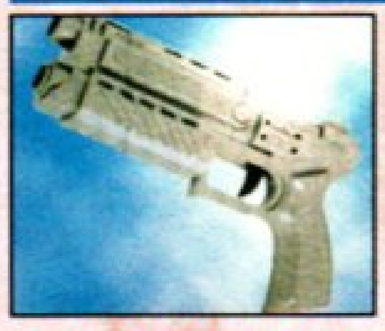
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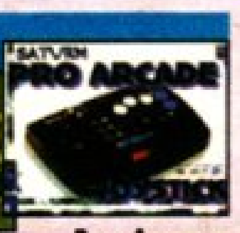
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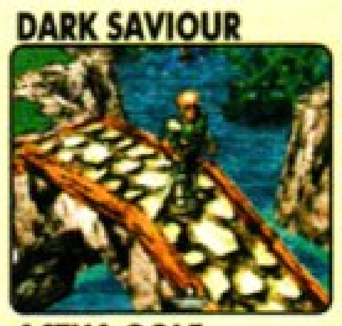
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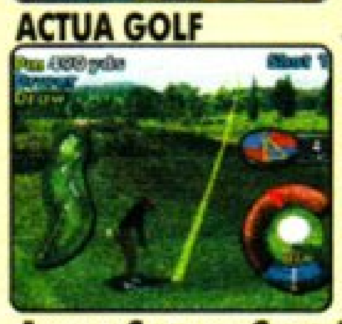
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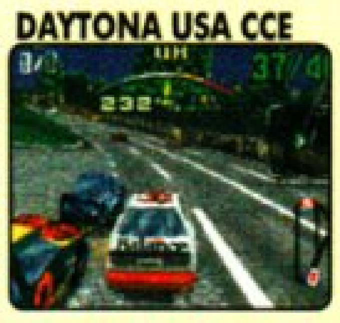


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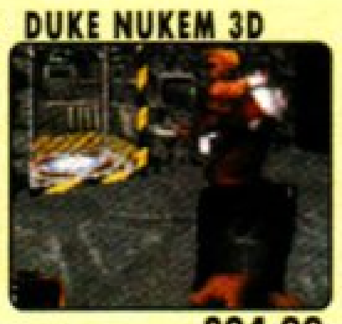


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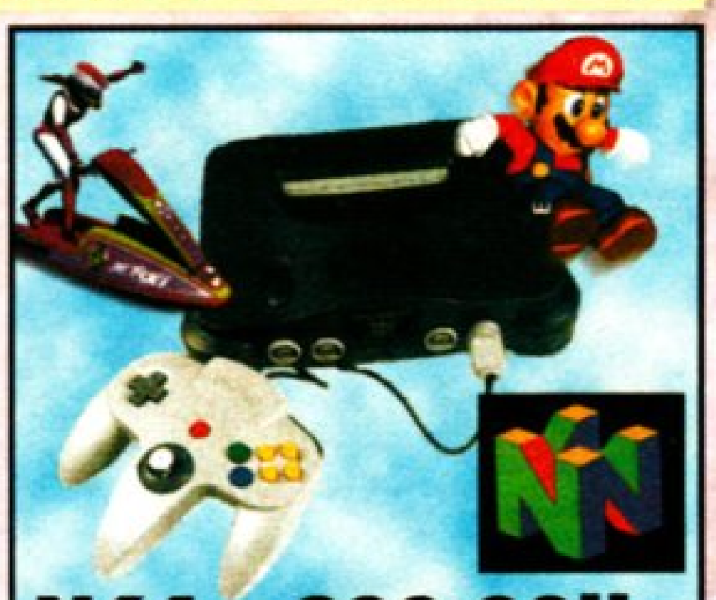
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Radiant Silvergun

Treasure only release great games - and that's official. Can they maintain this incredible run of form? God yes - Radiant Silvergun is awesome! GARY CUTLACK gets lucky, big time.

A shoot 'em up designed and coded by Treasure? Readers, I think we may have died and gone to heaven. Treasure have this uncanny knack of working out what it is that makes a game playable, then multiplying it by a hundred and cramming spoonfuls of it into their own top-class titles. This time, they've taken the traditional 2D shoot 'em up format, ripped it apart and jazzed it up beyond belief, creating the hardcore blast-a-rama known as Radiant Silvergun.

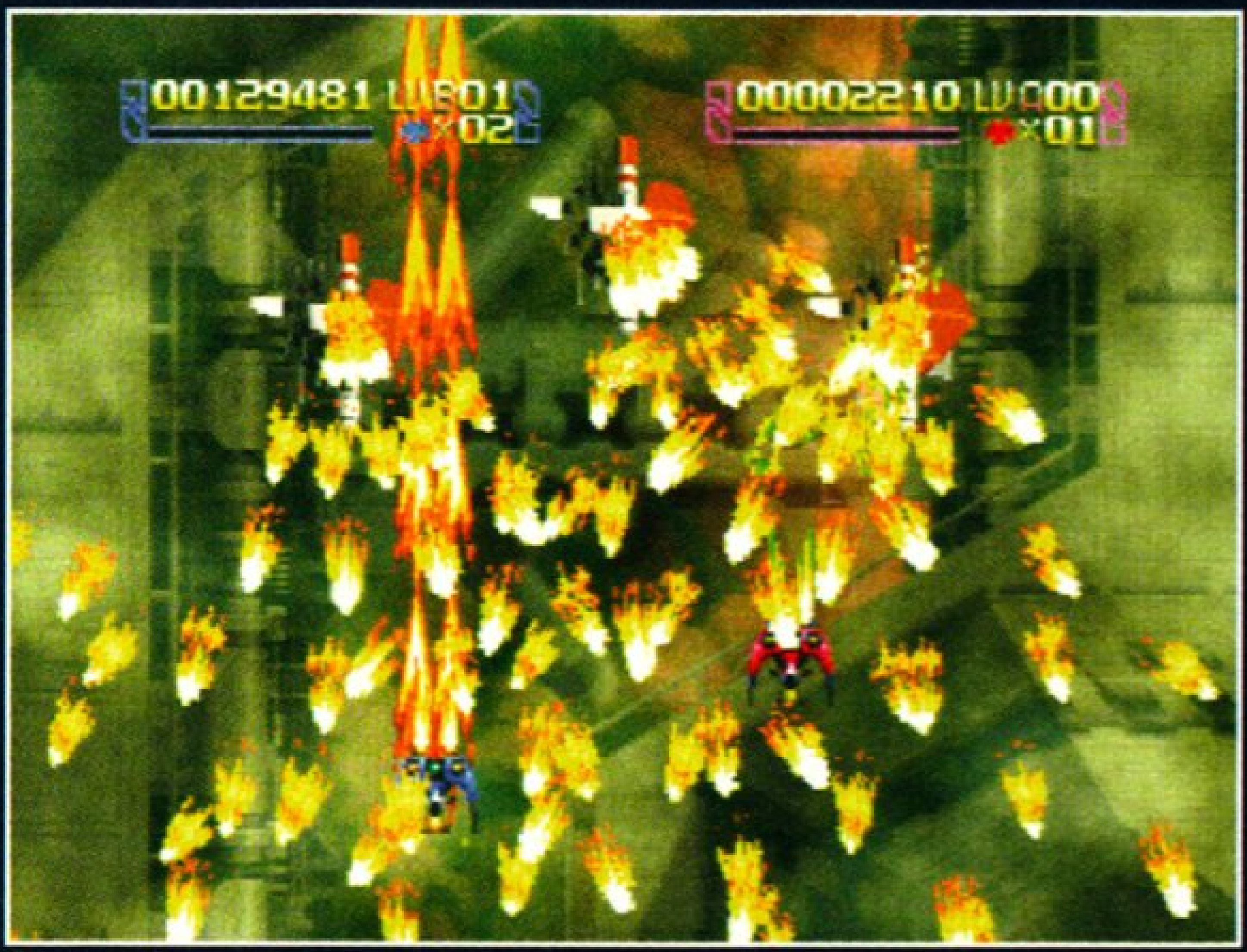






A GIFT FROM THE GODS!

Treasure themselves have sent us this super-exclusive pre-production copy of the Saturn version, meaning that we're playing the Saturn game before the ST-V coin-op has been released in UK arcades! Fantastic. The game is identical to the coin-op version we featured back in issue #31, save for a slight tinkering with the power-up system. The gameplay is typical Treasure boss-fixated action, with huge levels split into four

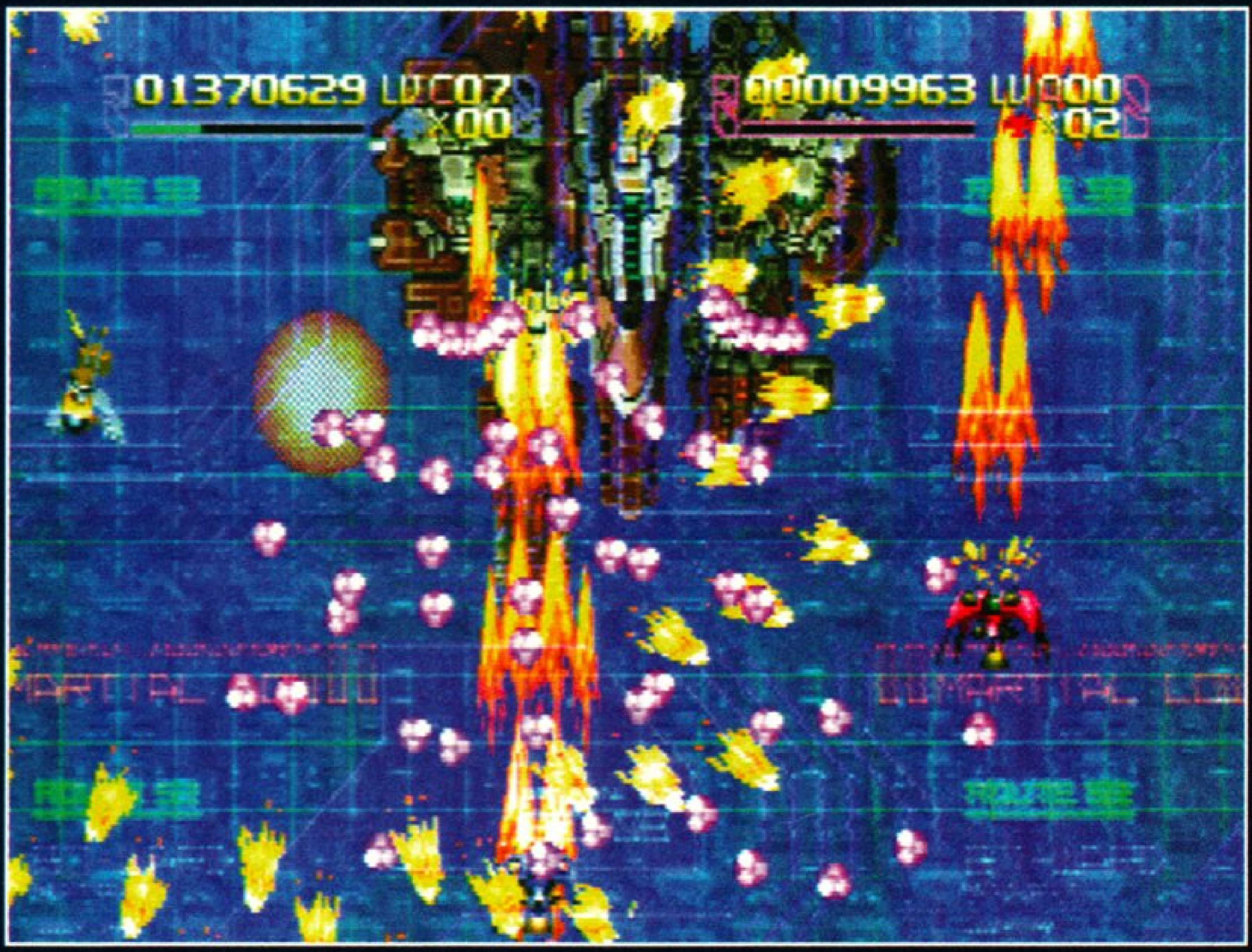


▲ How many bullets are there on screen? HOW MANY?! Radiant Silvergun really is incredibly tough, but that's just how we like 'em.





▲ Amazing special effects, fantastic gameplay - it's a winner all right.



It's an absolutely rock-hard shoot 'em up with some of the best graphics the Saturn has ever produced. We think you're gonna like this one!



or five individual boss encounters, and yes, these bosses can only be described as 'awesome'.

THE BOSS WANTS TO SEE YOU... NOW!

If NASA needs any advice on how to build futuristic machines that rotate, zoom in, morph and lock together with other ships, all the while shooting five different weapons all over the place, they'd better ask Treasure for a bit of design help. The bosses are true to form here, and plentiful too, with five appearing during the first level! And they look just gorgeous too. Giving the game a futuristic space-based plot has allowed the Treasure team to really overload the visual side of things, with Radiant Silvergun containing the best graphics ever to grace a shoot 'em up. And no, that's not a casual exaggeration - the 100% hi-res graphics and top-notch special effects really push the poor old Saturn to the limit - and then some!

YOU CAN'T DO THAT ON PLAYSTATION

Similarly, any game coders needing tips on how to get the Saturn running perfectly in hi-res mode, with clever multi-layered parallax scrolling, trippy 3D background effects and unfeasibly huge amounts of action whizzing over the top, would be well advised to give these guys a ring - the graphics in Radiant Silvergun are absolutely spot on. Especially some of the transparent backgrounds, which scroll, pulsate, rotate and just generally move around looking cool underneath the action.

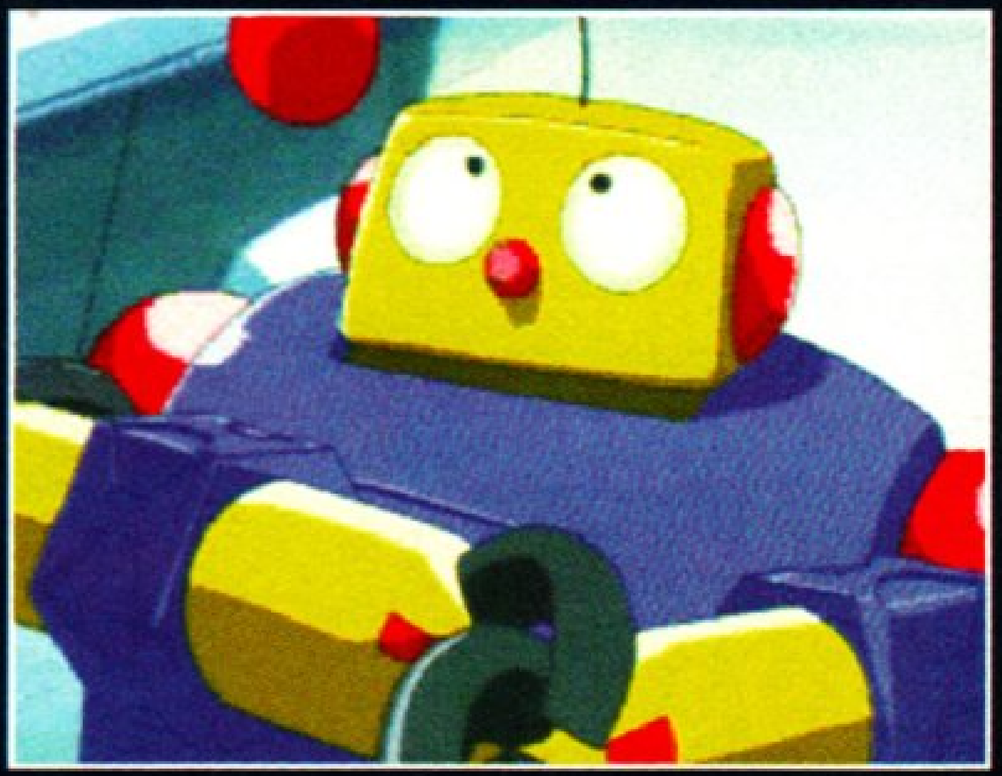
IT'S THE NEW STYLE

You know how shoot 'em ups usually work - a wave of ships come in from the left, another wave from the right and so on. Blah, blah - how predictable. This doesn't happen in Radiant Silvergun - baddies attack from all sides, all angles and all of the time! Once again, our friendly little black box is proving itself to be untouchable when it come to 2D visuals, only this time the Saturn is also throwing some incredible hi-res 3D überbosses around at the same time! For my money, this is by far the best >>



▲ Another bullet-packed screenshot. This boss changes shape too.

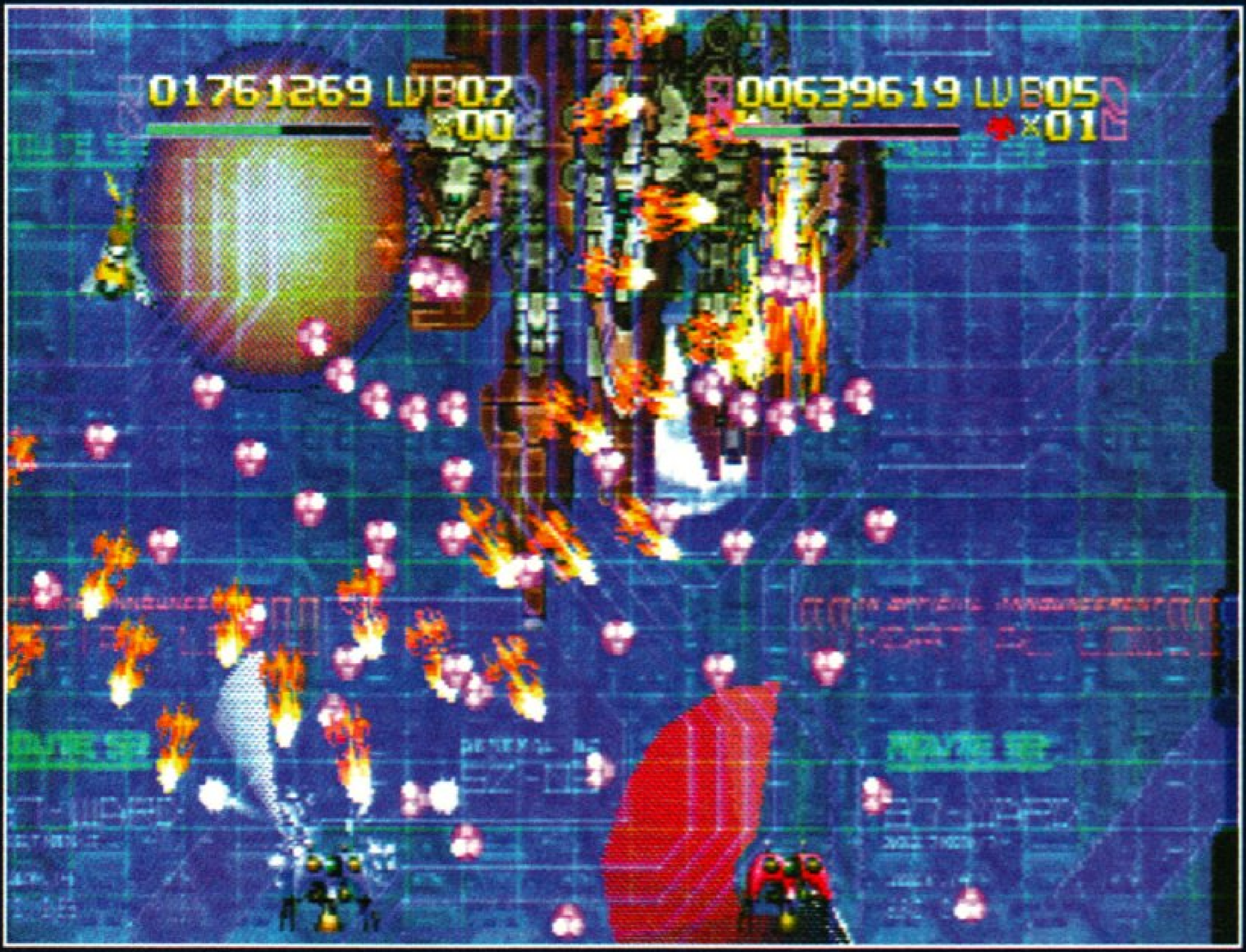








▲ There's a new, fully animated intro for the Saturn version - time-travelling, world saving action is go!





▲ Another addition to the massive list of 'Cool Things About Radiant Silvergun' - plenty of score-boosting bonuses hidden around the levels.

Each level is split into four or five sections, each with some hardcore boss action at the end. Amateur gamers need not apply!





▲ Treasure are once again proving their boss design mastery...

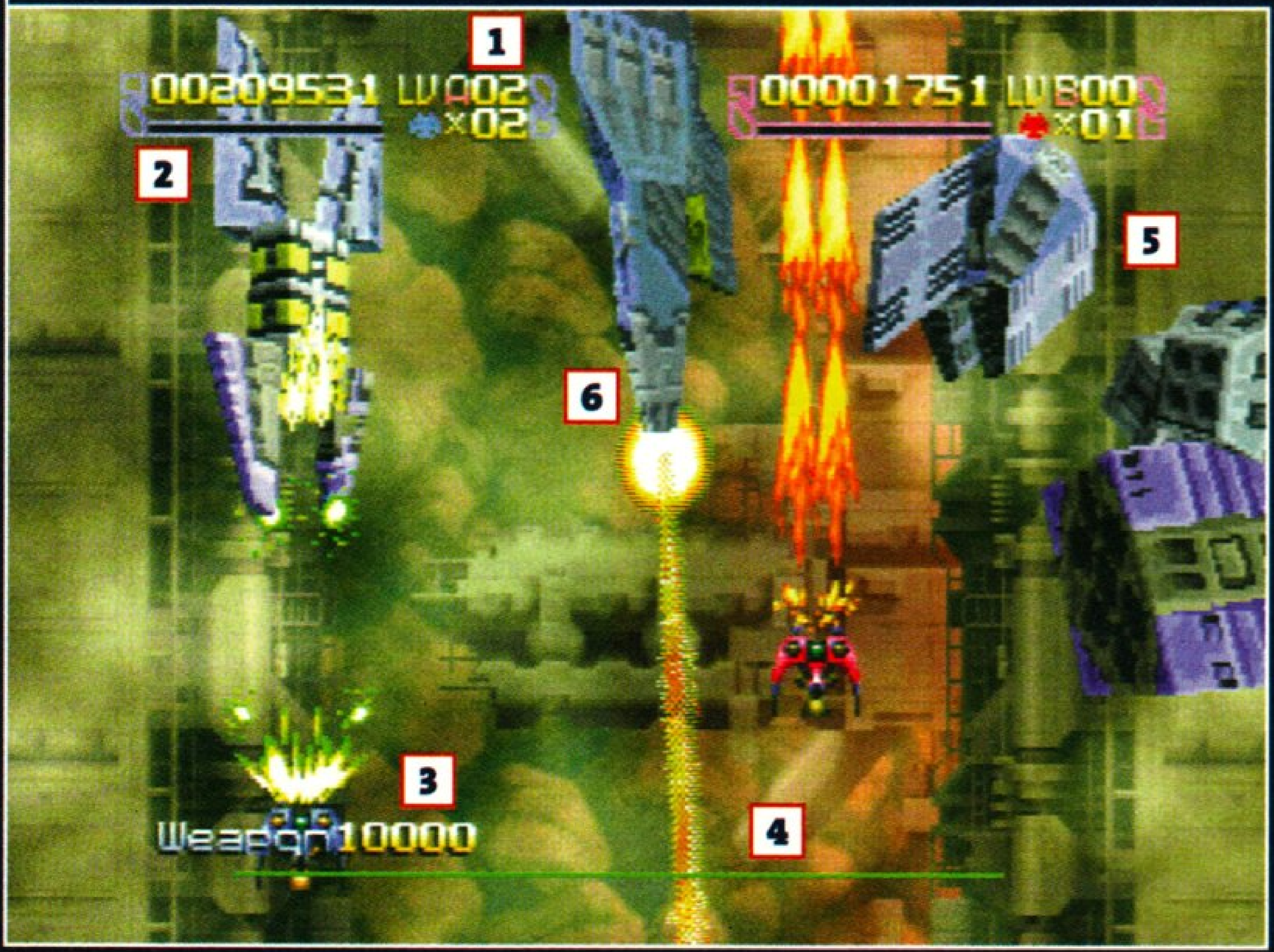
>> combination of 2D and 3D graphics that the Saturn has ever produced. ThunderForce V was good, but a bit glitchy and prone to some pretty lo-res moments - what you see in Radiant Silvergun is truly in a different league, with easily the most laser-packed and gorgeous-looking screens going. And yes, that includes all the arcade shoot 'em ups around too.

EXTRA, EXTRA, EXTRA HARD MODE

Actually, stick another couple of 'extras' into that headline - Radiant Silvergun is one of the hardest shoot 'em ups, ever! Honestly, some parts of the game seem absolutely impossible when you first reach them, with every level featuring super-high levels of enemy firepower and attacks. It really is amazingly

BONUS POINTS?

After each boss encounter, the game gives you a destruction percentage rating. This doesn't relate to the whole preceding level, just to how well you destroyed the boss. If you only hammer away at the weak-spot and destroy it pretty quickly, you'll only receive around a 40% bonus. Why? Well, experts need to take an extra risk, destroying the various side pods, laser turrets and missile launchers BEFORE targeting the weak-spot, to earn that 100% bonus score for comprehensively taking apart the mechanoids. Now that's cool.



1. **Weapon level** - cycles between A, B and C to show current power levels for each weapon.

2. **Radiant Sword gauge** - absorb pink enemy shots to charge the super-weapon.

3. **Weapon bonus** - land a continuous hit with one weapon for an instant bonus.

4. **Enemy life gauge** - how much longer to survive.

5. **Side pods** - destroy these first...

6. **Weak-spot** - then target here last to get the 100% bonus.





▲ 7. **Awesome graphics** - awesome graphics!

WEAPON UPGRADE?

Continuously destroy enemies of the same colour to receive a chain bonus, while using the same weapon to do this gradually increases the power level of the hardware up to an alien-scaring level 33. Use the same weapon to continuously hit an enemy for around ten seconds to instantly receive a cool 10,000 points weapon bonus, and also upgrade the weapon used. It's incredible all right...





▲ Continues are limited in the even tougher Saturn Mode.



▲ Don't panic - that massive red discharge is the super-damaging Radiant Sword in action, this time in a weird vector graphics level.

WIPEOUT 2751

This is the mother of all bosses - and it's only one of the mid-level ships on level two!
(1) It's not the biggest, but look what it can do.
(2) So now it's filling the screen with fire...
(3) and laser...
(4) AND MORE LASER! Hot-damn, that's one mean alien.
(5) But I can take the power. Nice explosions too.

1


2


3


4


5


tough. Which is good, because as we all know, that's why shooting games exist. Okay, so if you're a weak-willed, namby-pamby gaming ponce, it's quite easy to stick the game on Easy Mode and continue your way through it in one session, but as we also know, continuing is for wimps - completing Radiant Silvergun on one credit could well become a life-long obsession.

THE POWER SYSTEM

There aren't any new weapons to earn in Radiant Silvergun. Odd that. But it all becomes pretty clear after the first couple of goes why this is - the seven (yep, seven!) pre-packed weapons are all so different and well tuned, that mastering these puppies is the key to making progress. And it's important to experiment with each weapon too, as it quickly becomes essential to use specific guns in order to blast unscathed through tricky areas. Anybody remember Hellfire on the Megadrive? It's a bit like that, only with graphics that are, ooh, about one thousand times better!

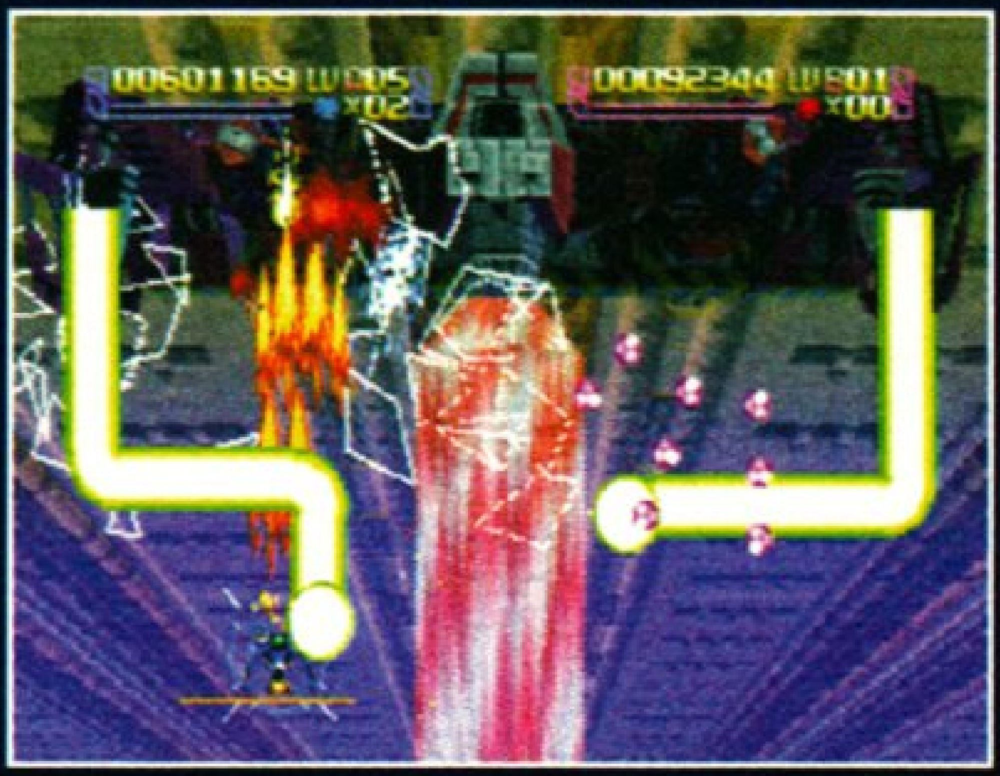
SUB-BOSS ACTION

So... after battling through a rock-hard level and defeating the massive boss, it's on to the next level, right? Oh no, it's not that easy. Each level is split into four or five sub-sections, each with a lump of normal shooting action followed by one of these awesome creations - and Treasure, world-renowned for their boss-creating genius, have spoilt us rotten here, with some of the busiest and most action-packed screenfuls of tasty laser-based gaming that we've ever seen. Coin-ops included. Seriously, count how many bullets are on screen at any one time, then imagine trying to dodge 'em all. The Arcade Mode does allow infinite continues, but the extra-tough Saturn Mode doesn't!

All of this comes from the first two levels! We'll have more action next month.



▲ It really is essential to master all of the seven different weapons.



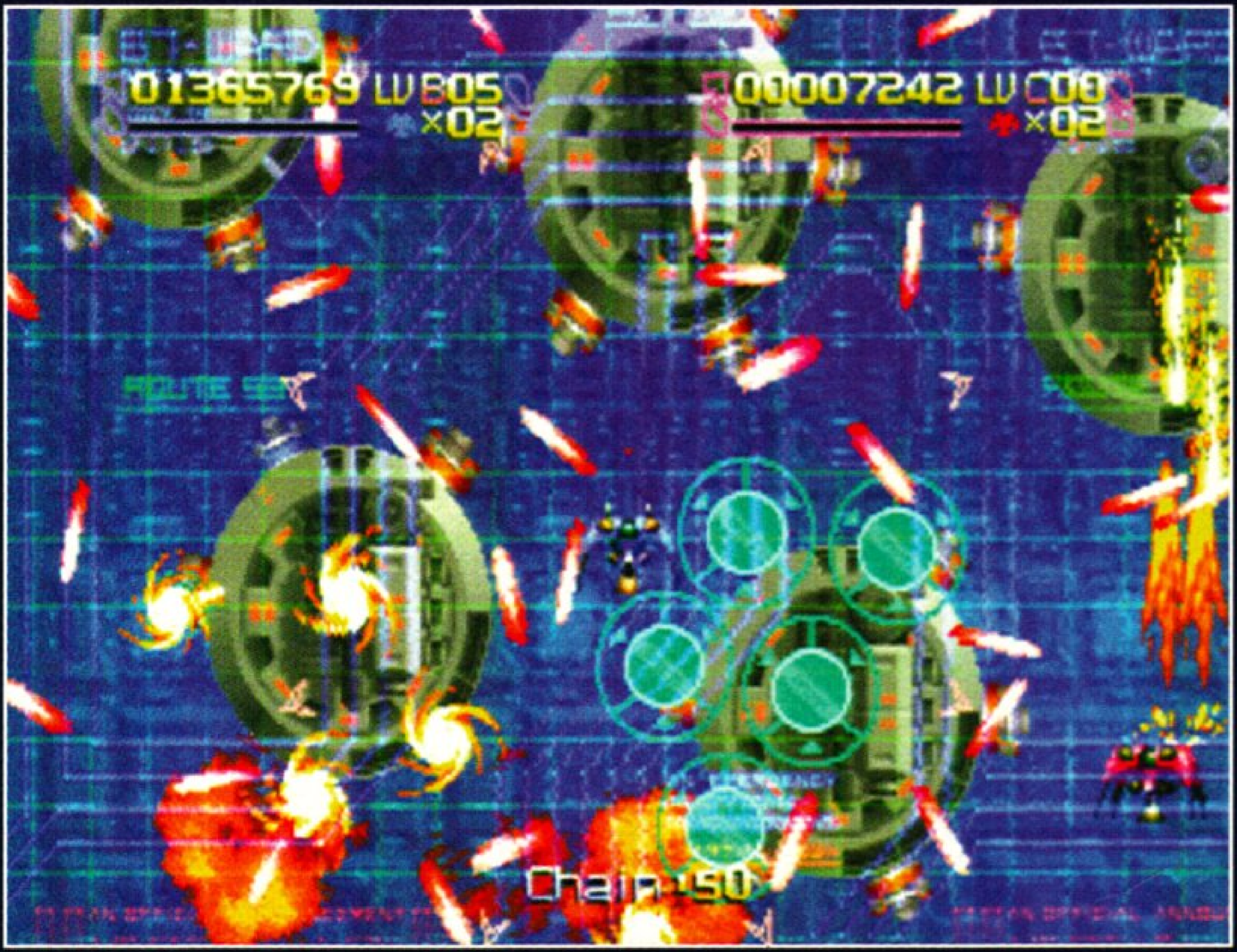




▲ I think I might be about to die. Again.



▲ The left ship has just fired the Radiant Sword.



Most screens are incredibly action-packed, with the Saturn performing miracles by displaying some stunning 2D and 3D effects. Impressive.



▲ It's an ace game, but it looks like the Saturn version is unlikely to get released here - console yourself by playing the identical arcade version!





▲ (Right) Hide behind the blocks to avoid this boss' mega-laser.

OH, JUST ONE MORE GO...

They've really taken the gameplay back to basics here, with progress through the game depending on good, old fashioned skill, rather than the mere accumulation of firepower. To get through the first level without dying you NEED to use three different weapons. That's a fact, and one of the reasons why Radiant Silvergun is such a hardcore blaster. Another reason is the 'Destruction Bonus' that's added up at the end of each sub-section. Achieving a 100% 'Perfect' rating on every boss encounter makes the game even tougher, with ace pilots being rewarded for bravely destroying every single section of boss, instead of just going for the quick kill. Players can also go through the game shooting only one colour of enemy to rack-up massive multiplying bonuses, but jeez, we're talking unfeasible levels of difficulty there.



MORE TO COME!

Much, much more to come, as incredibly, all of the pictures, bosses and weapons shown in this feature come from the first two levels of the game! Later levels feature incredible 3D skyscrapers, gigantic motherships and massive rockets, along with the best-looking and hardest end-of-game boss of all time. No, really. In fact, by the time you read this, Radiant Silvergun should be available to play in a select few British arcades, so there's no excuse for you not to go and experience this awesome blaster for yourselves. You really should. Most people here in the office have at least one Treasure title in their list of favourite games - they'd better make room for another one...

PHASED PLASMA RIFLE IN THE 40 WATT RANGE

Uniquely for a modern shoot 'em up, there are no extra weapons to gain in Radiant Silvergun. But don't worry, the ship comes ready-fitted with SEVEN top-grade guns for you to play with right from the start.



Radiant Sword: Absorb energy from enemy bullets, then chuck the power back at 'em with one apocalyptic mega-blast!



Vulcan: Forward-firing blaster, for that in-your-face all-out attack when you need it most.



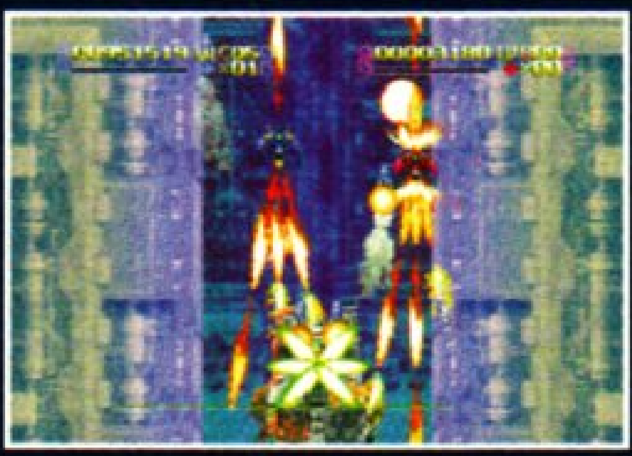
Homing: Weak but automatic, freeing the player to concentrate on staying alive.



Spread: Comes in very handy when negotiating tight tunnel sections. Powerful too.



Homing plasma: Targeting beam locks on to nearby enemies - plasma blows 'em away! Looks cool.



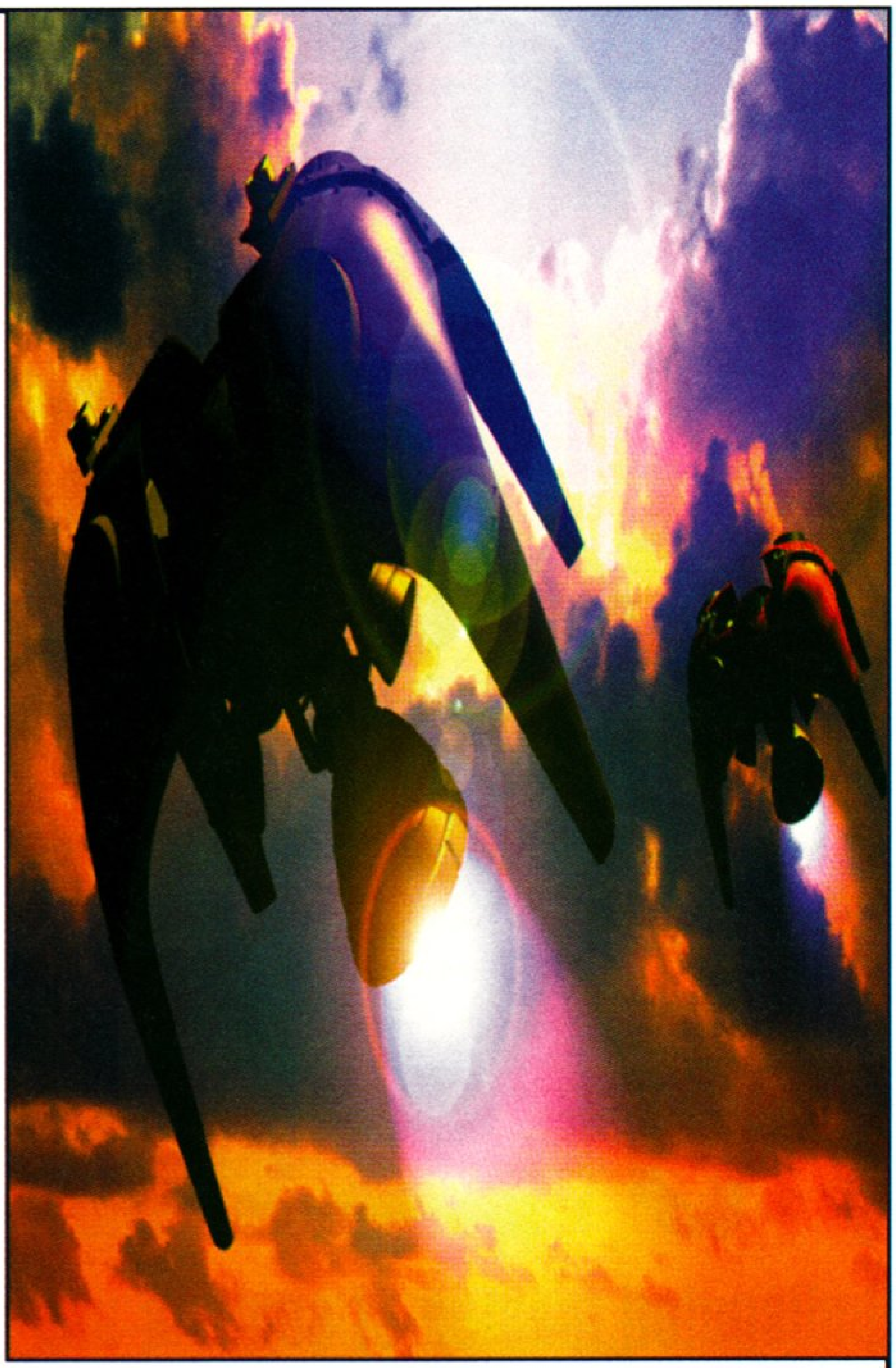
Back Wide: Essential for those "it's behind you!" panic moments. Small forward fire for safety purposes.



Lock on spread: Produces mini targets which seek-out enemies, then fires a homing laser.

MASTERS OF THE GAME: TREASURE INTERVIEWED!

SSM speaks exclusively to Treasure's President, Mr Maegawa. Japanese Editor WARREN HARROD reports.



SSM Why did you decide to create Radiant Silvergun?
Mr Maegawa At Treasure, we've been creating action games from the very beginning, but there's always been talk of doing a shoot 'em up. However, from a sales perspective, shooting games are always a little risky so we haven't been able to do one up to now. This time we had a good game we wanted to produce and an opportunity to go for it.

At the arcades, there are still a lot of shooting game fans so we wanted to appeal to those users first then after that we hoped to convey to home users that shoot 'em ups are still interesting to play.

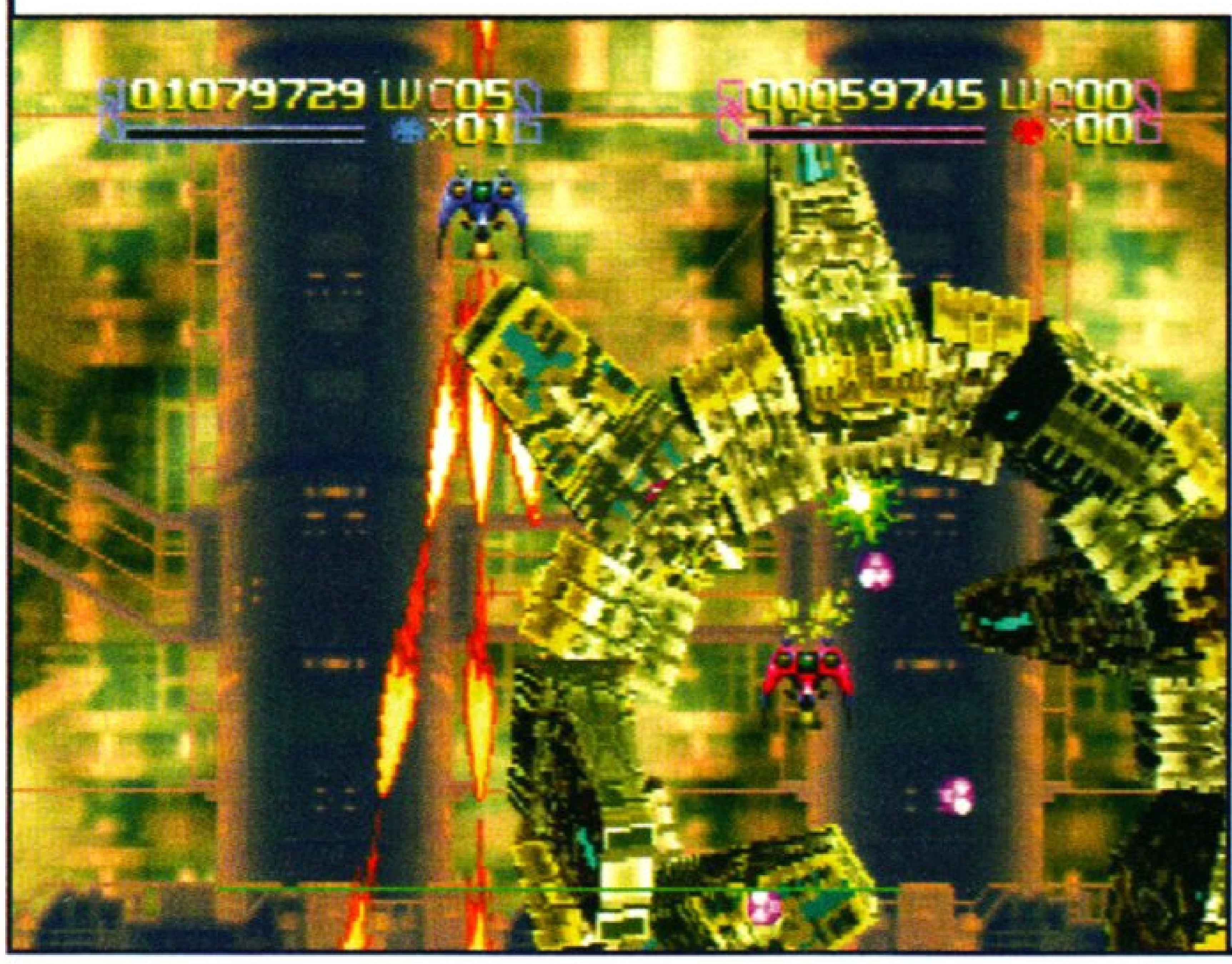
SSM Did you choose the ST-V board simply because is would be easier to port to the Saturn?
MM Of course we had porting in mind, but Treasure has always created games for Sega and in fact ever since we did Gunstar Heroes, they've wanted us to produce an arcade game. We've had a lot of experience producing Saturn games and, to a certain extent, that knowledge makes some areas much easier to do so we can devote more time to making the game as opposed to learning about the hardware.

SSM What are the main differences between the arcade version and the Saturn game?
MM The biggest difference is that we've included an opening movie and made the scenario element a lot more interesting and deeper. There's only so much you can put into an arcade version because no matter what you do, the game has to be fast. Arcade players don't like waiting and they hate these kind of intro demos. All these movie sequences were cut from the arcade version.

SSM How many people worked on Radiant Silvergun?
MM The team was fairly small. There were three programmers, four designers and one person working on the sound.

SSM For a long time you only produced Sega games, but with titles on the N64 and PlayStation you've now become a multi-platform company. What are your plans for the future?
MM (Laughs) That's difficult to say. Fundamentally, we'd like to keep Sega as the core of our company, but we'd also like to produce a variety of games by becoming free of any one platform. Yes, we've done N64 and PS games and from now on we couldn't continue only making Sega games. The other day, Sega announced the Dreamcast and we are certainly interested in that. We definitely intend to keep making lots of Sega games.

SSM What's your impression of the Dreamcast hardware?
MM Well, first of all the hardware specification is very good. However, at the end of the day, it's not the hardware but the software that I'm most interested in. At the moment, the Dreamcast has the highest specifications of any home console available and that's interesting. It's an exceptionally good piece of hardware, but that's just the machine itself.



SSM Everyone is talking about the 3D abilities of the Dreamcast, but will 2D games get better as well?
MM Of course they'll improve, I believe. Even though it has a lot of special 3D capabilities, a machine with a spec as powerful as that will be able to do anything.

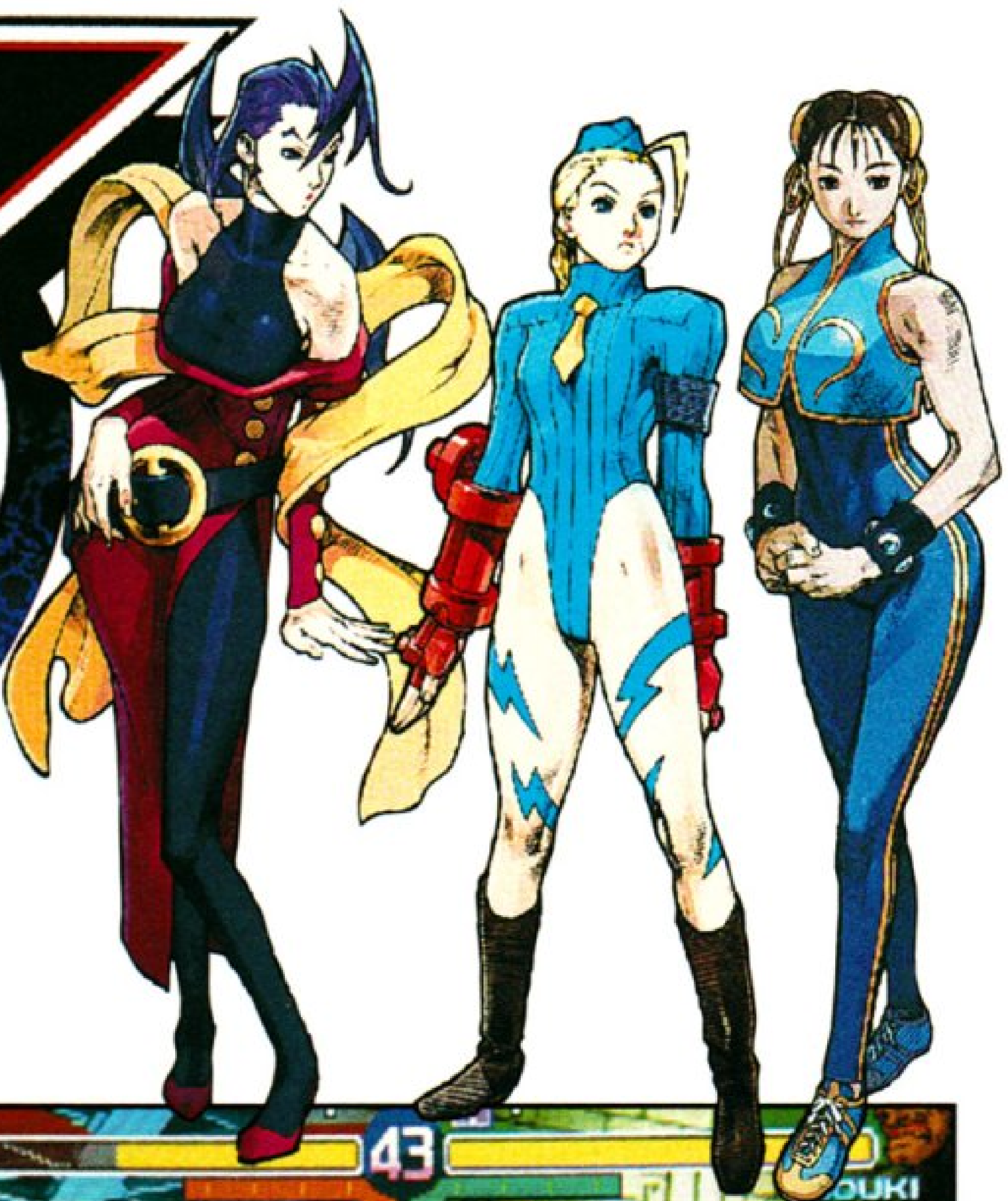
SSM Do you plan to create any more Saturn games?
MM I don't really know. It's difficult to answer that question. It really does depend on so many conditions. At the moment, Sega aren't doing so well and it's difficult to release Saturn titles. I'd love to keep on producing Saturn games, but you can't run a company just on feelings. Personally speaking, I don't like companies to keep releasing new hardware so often. Just as we get used to developing in one hardware environment, the next platform comes along and we have to start from the beginning again.

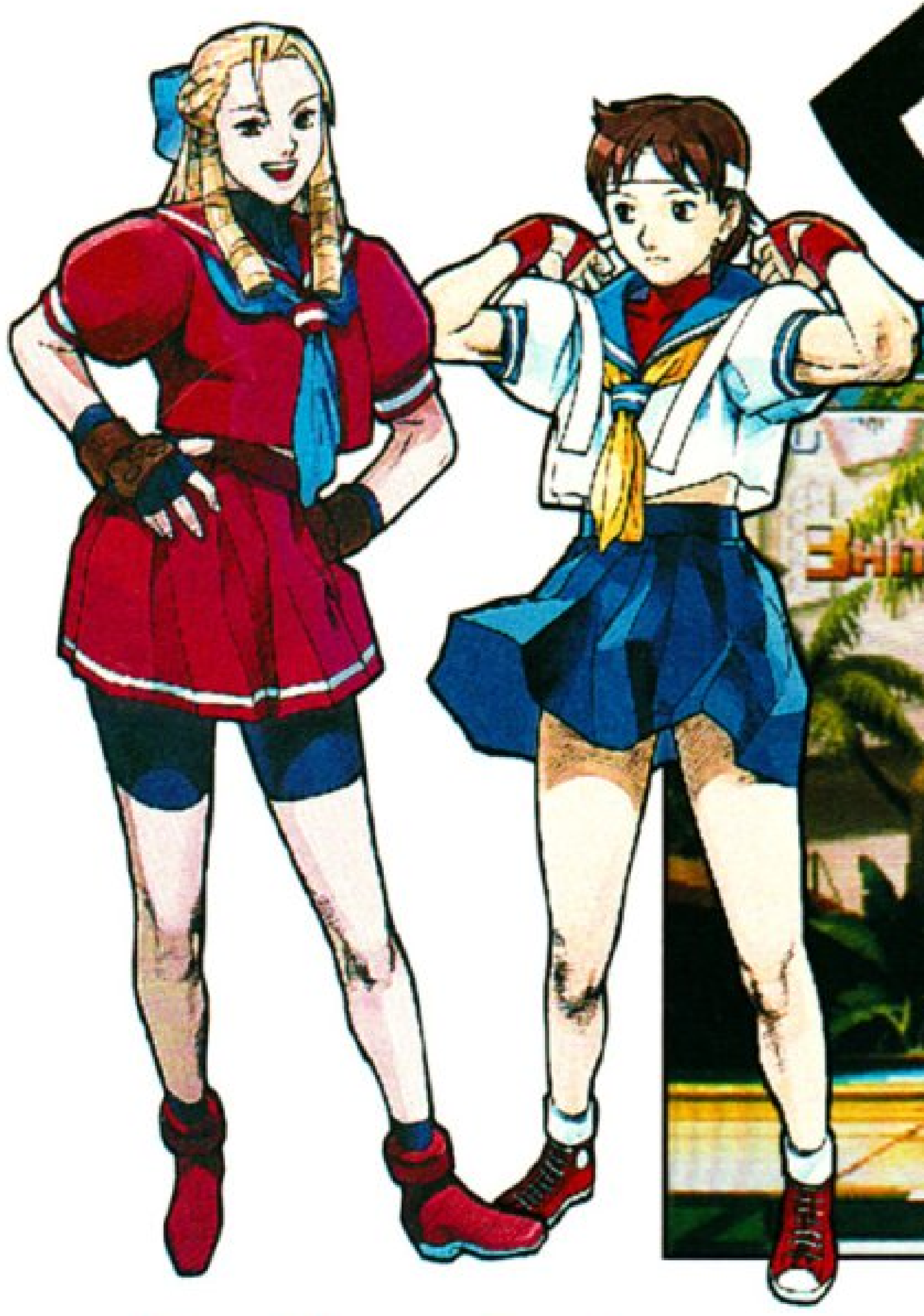
SSM What is everyone working on at the moment?
MM Most of the people are working on a new project right now. The PlayStation Silhouette Mirage team is very small because it's only a Saturn port.

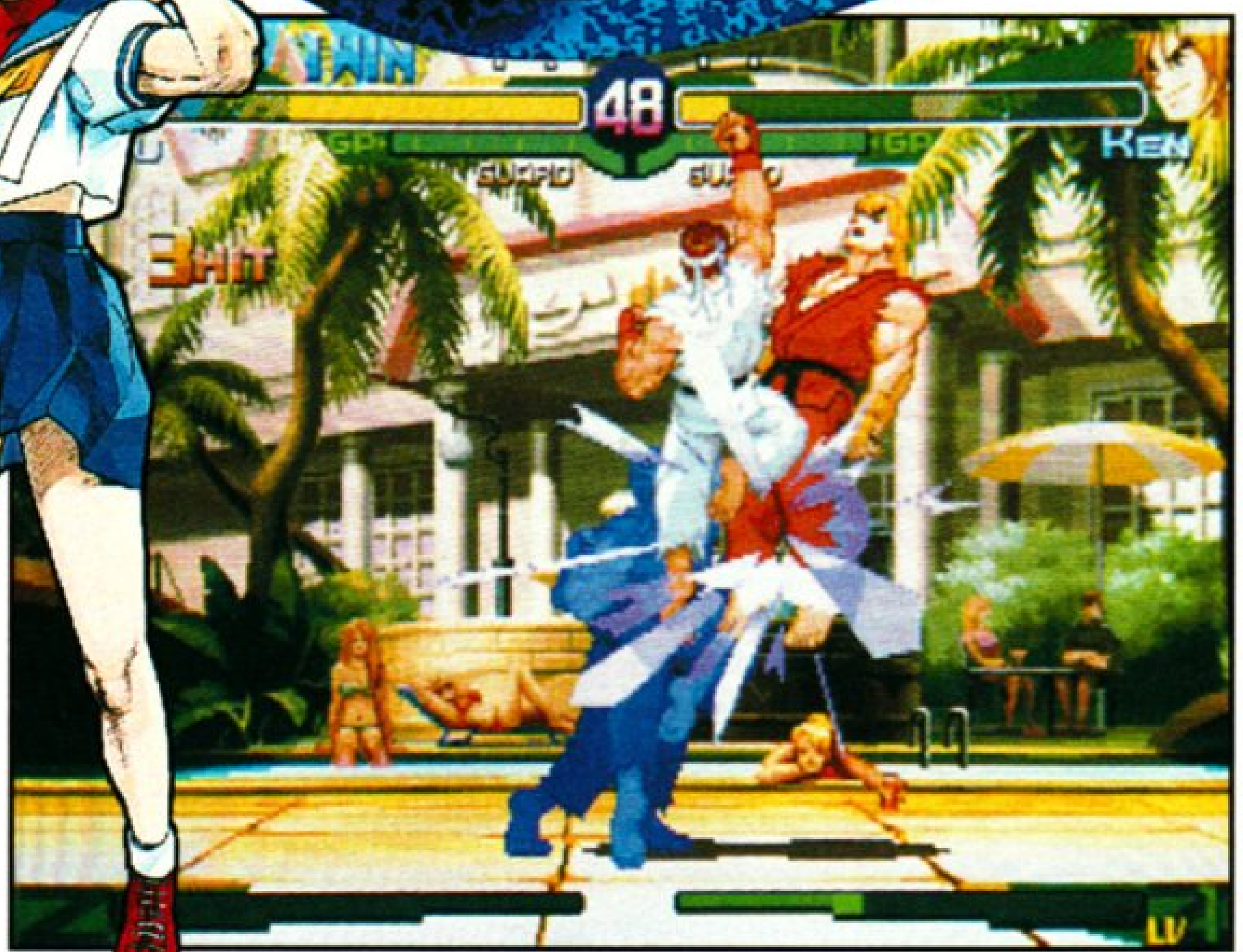
SSM Finally, do you have any message for your English fans?
MM If you consider Treasure's users then you have to say that we are more popular abroad than in Japan. Certainly, our overseas sales have really helped to support the company. We wouldn't be where we are to day without all your readers' help, so I'd like to say a big thank you and hope that they'll continue to support us in the future as well!

Note: Street Fighter Alpha 3 is still under development and subject to change. Comments by the editors are personal opinions only and are not based on any information provided by Capcom.

Street Fighter Alpha 3









Undisputed master of sequels and king of the 2D beat 'em up, Capcom's titles consistently dazzle the videogaming world. This month the Japanese giant is at it again as the long-awaited Street Fighter Alpha 3 is finally unveiled! MATT YEO reports

After the somewhat disappointing debut of Street Fighter III and lacklustre response to its 3D beat 'em ups, Capcom's legions of fans may have been worried that their favourite fighting game developer had lost the plot somewhat. Fortunately, faith was restored last year with the stunning Marvel vs Capcom blasting into arcades, and such amazing console conversions as X-Men vs Street Fighter and Vampire Savior silencing even the company's harshest critics.

On a seemingly endless roll with its long-lasting CP-System II arcade board, Capcom has now answered the prayers of beat 'em up aficionados everywhere by unleashing the 2D scrapping sequel we've all been waiting for: Street Fighter Alpha 3! Taking the same basic gameplay and characters from the first two titles in the series, Capcom looks set to push the boundaries of beat 'em ups even further with enhanced Super Moves, multiple game modes, seven new fighters and much, much more.



CHARACTER STUDIES

The most immediate addition to the series has to be the inclusion and reinstatement of such fan favourites as Blanka, Vega, E Honda and Cammy along with the debut of brand spanking new combatants, Cody, Karin and Rainbow Mika. By boosting the game's roster up to a staggering 25 characters, Capcom appears to have covered all angles, catering to the particular tastes of even the most discerning fighting fans. What's more, all of the returning characters have been tweaked to perfection and been enhanced with a number of extra moves, some of which were dropped in Street Fighter Alpha 2. For instance, Ryu gets a Level 3 Shouryuken move called Mes-Shouryuken, Chun Li regains her Spinning Bird Kick, Dhalsim receives a



▲ Select Chun Li's classic outfit or SFA2 togs!



▲ M Bison unleashes his lethal Psycho power.





▲ Returning Street Fighter characters have been tweaked to perfection and many now possess new moves or variations on existing attacks.





Improved Counters, multiple gameplay modes and 25 playable characters... Capcom has ensured that Street Fighter Alpha 3's got the lot!

▲ Honda shows Sagat just why he's the number one sumo wrestler in Japan.

new Yoga Tempest move and M Bison plays like he did in SSFIITurbo, but has a new Super Move called Scarlet Mirage.

JUGGLES & COUNTERS

Gameplay remains as intuitive as ever, mixing Dragon Punch and Fireball moves with such familiar features as Air Blocking and Alpha Counters (however, these have been altered, but more on them later). Taking its cue from Marvel Super Heroes, SFA3 now includes more opportunities for players to juggle their opponents by knocking them into the air. By catching foes with an uppercut, opposing players are launched into the stratosphere whereupon a host of combos become available. Although considered a cheap way to play by many fans, its now possible to counter juggling moves by quickly pressing two punch buttons, allowing a player's character to recover and counterattack. Eagle-eyed gamers will no doubt have noticed the Guard Meter located below each character's life bar. The Guard Meter allows players to block hits, up to a point, before opponents smash through their guard. This is quite a handy option for less experienced players, but in general, characters who are slow moving and need to block often (like the grapplers Zangief and E Honda) have longer Guard Meters to compensate for their lack of speed.

Alpha Counters have been changed slightly, requiring players to charge their Super Meters to at least Level 2, and are now activated by tapping Forward + (P + K). When performed correctly, a bolt of lightning flashes across the screen before your character blocks an incoming attack and counters with a cool move of their own. Impressive stuff, but the most radical feature of Street Fighter Alpha 3 is without a doubt the imaginative ISM System. >>



▲ Alpha Counters now boast stunning new lightning effects.



▲ All your favourite Street Fighters return in Capcom's latest classic.



▲ Remember Cody from Final Fight? Well now he's back and he's tougher than ever. Take that Ryu!











Select an ISM and Street Fighter Alpha 3 plays differently every time. Custom Combos, Supers and Specials... the choice is yours!

ISM SYSTEM REVEALED!

After selecting a character, players are presented with one of three gameplay modes or ISMs. Each of these individual ISMs enables Street Fighter Alpha 3 to be played in a number of ways, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages. Here's what's on offer:

X ISM

Some Japanese gamers are already calling this 'Simple Mode'. With this ISM, characters play roughly the way they did in Street Fighter Alpha 2 Gold. Using the X ISM, your character does slightly more damage and is only capable of performing one predetermined Super Move. There also are a few changes to individual characters, Blanka for one is unable to dash in this ISM, Chun Li wears her SSFIITurbo outfit, and Sagat gets his Tiger Uppercut instead of his Tiger Blow (there are slight differences in terms of hits and damage between the two moves). Also worth a mention is that fact that Sodom uses his original Final Fight weapon in this ISM, a lethal Katana blade!









A ISM

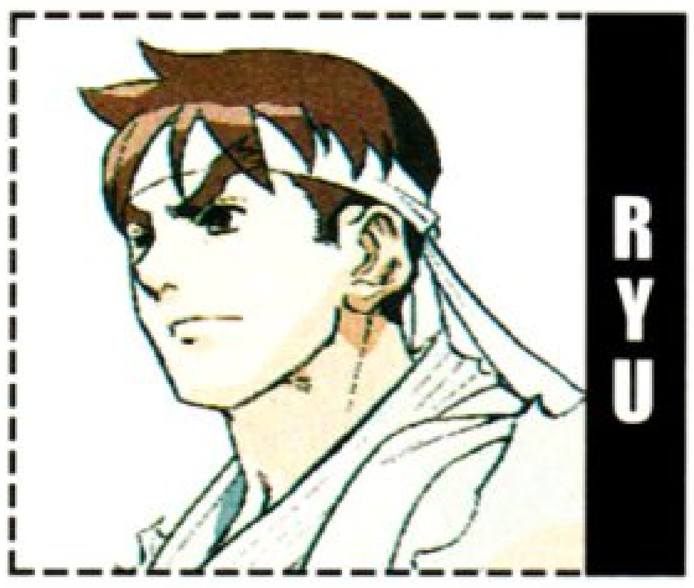
The game's Standard Mode. As in the previous Alpha titles, this ISM gives players three levels on their Super Meters and multiple Super Moves are available. In SFA3, the motion of activating Supers has been altered, requiring players to press LP for a Level 1 Super, MP for Level 2, and HP for Level 3. The ability to Super Cancel between Super Moves appears to have been removed.

V ISM

Advanced Mode. In addition to standard moves, players are only capable of pulling off Custom Combos instead of Super

CLASSIC CHARACTERS RETURN!

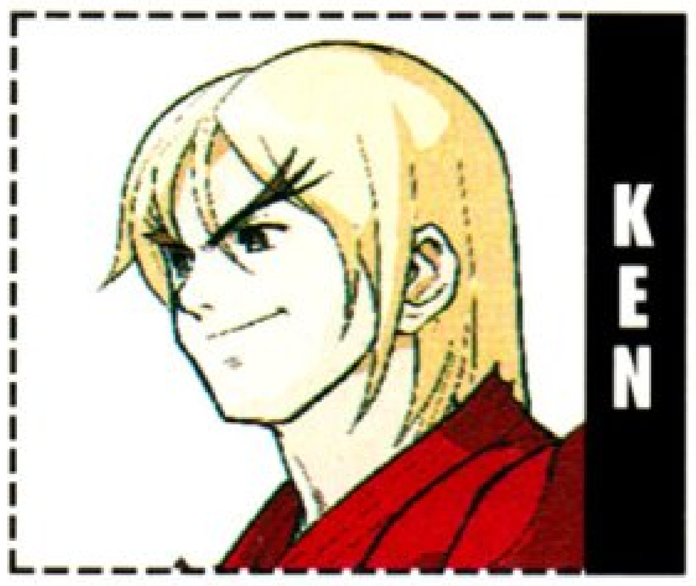
Always one to pay attention to fan requests, Capcom has reinstated a handful of cool Street Fighter characters from previous games in the series. Now there'll be no excuses from players unable to pick their all-time favourite fighters. Er... except Guile and Balrog that is.

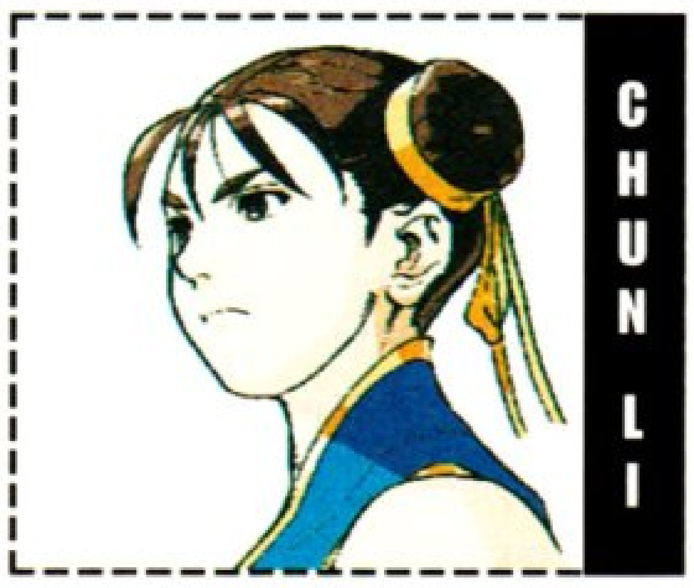












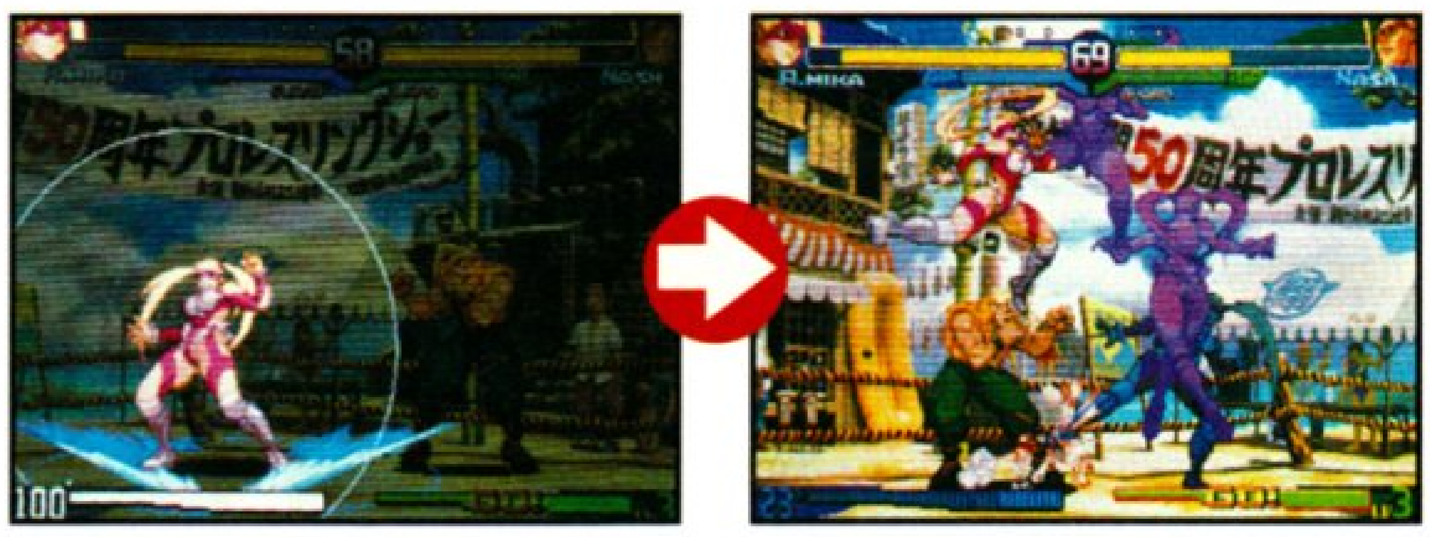








▲ The game's 2D backgrounds have been redrawn from scratch and feature loads of trademark Capcom animation touches.



▲ Newcomer Rainbow Mika lets rip with her very own Custom Combo.

Custom Combos are now activated in one of two ways. One method allows players to move anywhere on the screen at will!

Moves. However, Custom Combos are unlike those seen in SFA2. There are now two different modes of Custom Combos, the first moves your character forwards, unless you hold Back on the joystick. Whether it's possible to block and jump in this mode is not yet known. To execute this version of the Custom Combo, simply press LP + LK. The second version is executed by pressing MP + MK or HP + HK, and is essentially a free mode allowing players to move anywhere on the screen and even turn around to face opponents.

BUT WAIT... THERE'S MORE!

While these ISMs sound pretty stunning, the gameplay features and possible move combinations don't end there. As in recent Capcom beat 'em ups, your character actually begins a battle with a full Super Meter. So select A ISM and pick Akuma and your first move can be a Raging Demon! Unused Super Meters are carried over to the next round as before. The new Super Move Damage Reduction system is also an impressive addition, allowing players who are receiving a beating to tap away at their buttons and reduce the damage they're taking.

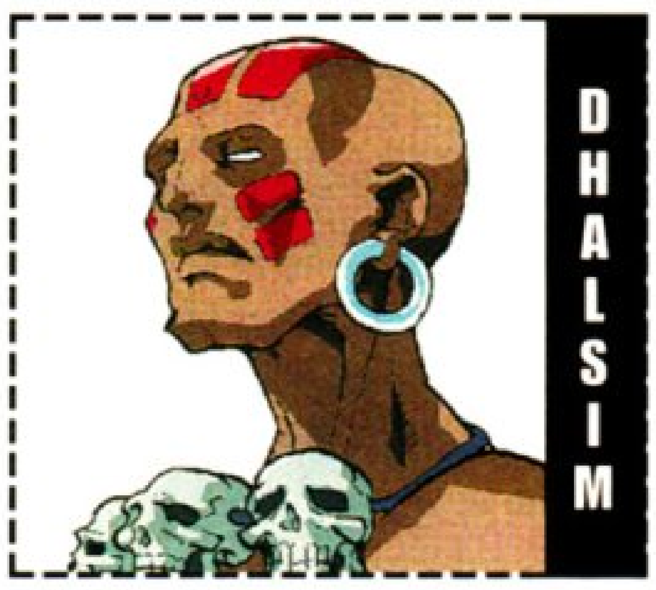
Phew! With all these cool features and gameplay extras, Street Fighter Alpha 3 looks set to knock the socks of every other arcade fighter this Summer. We'll have more coverage of Capcom's latest (and possibly greatest) beat 'em up in the coming months, so until then... remember your training!



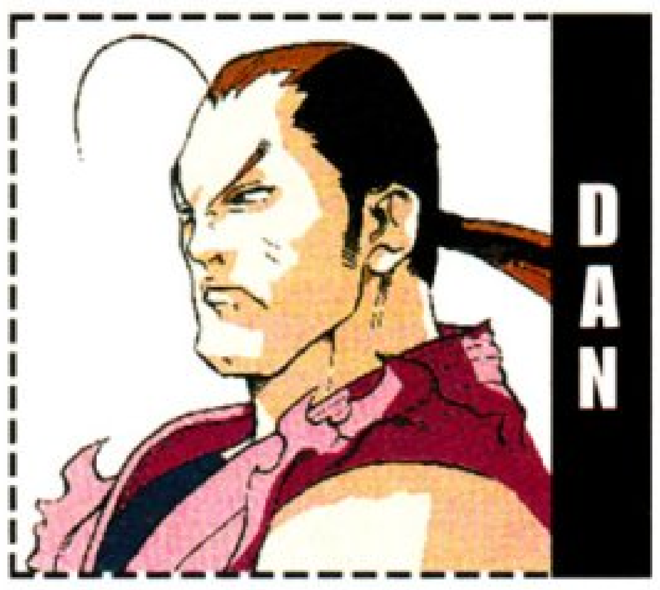


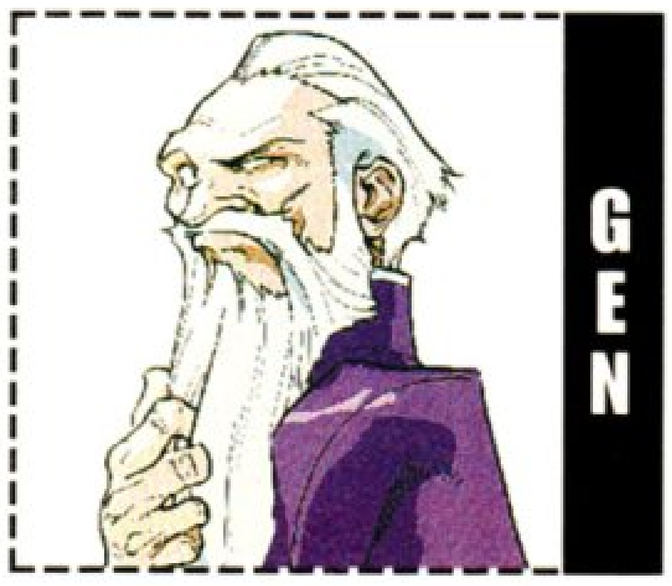
















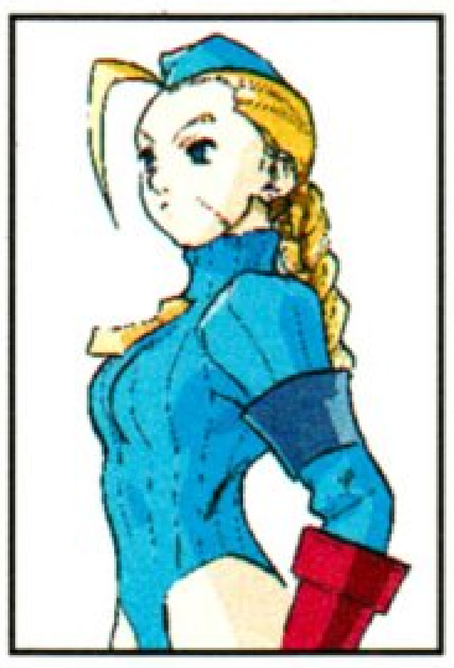


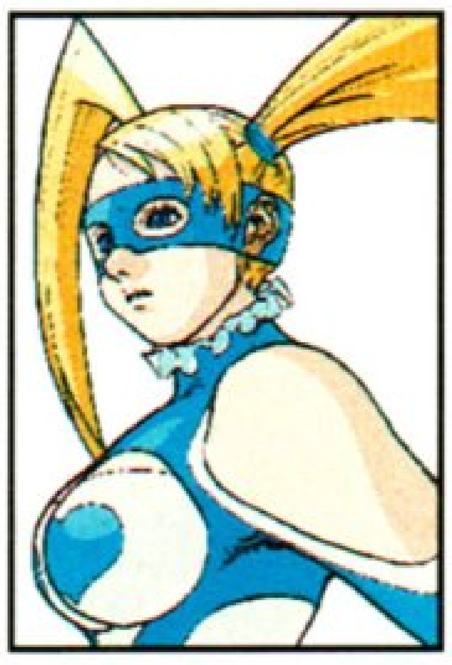


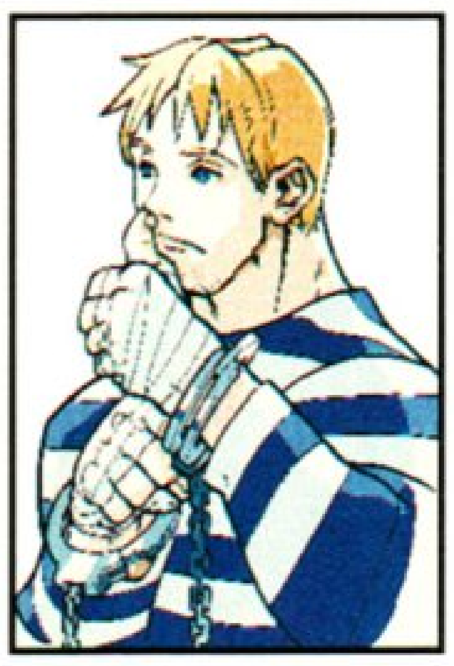
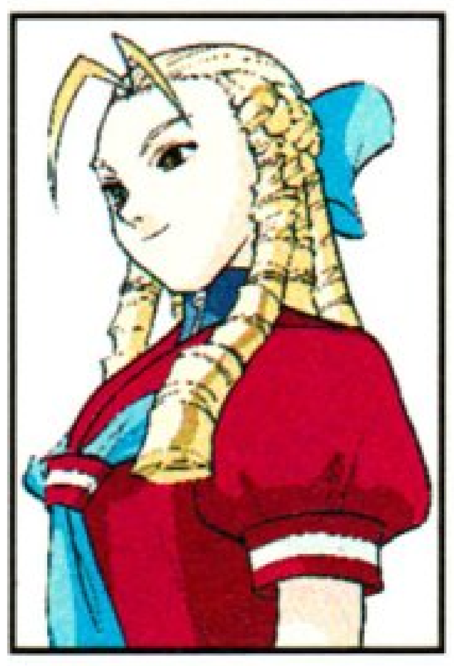
ENTER... THE NEW CHALLENGERS!

As well as the standard 18 returning characters and four old faces, Street Fighter Alpha 3 features three more combatants just waiting to be unleashed! What's more, as if a whopping 25 characters wasn't enough for even the most die-hard beat 'em up fans, our sources hint that there may be even more hidden fighters to discover.

With Street Fighter Alpha 3, Capcom has created yet another instant classic. Look for more in-depth game coverage in future issues of SSM!



BLANKA



The beast is back! Emerging from his jungle lair, Blanka returns to the Street Fighting world in a bid to regain his former glory. Playing almost identically as he did in SSFIITurbo, he now has a cool dashing move and a hilarious Super Move, the Tropical Hazard. When activated, a palm tree appears, Blanka gives it a good shake and his opponent is battered with an avalanche of fruit!





CAMMY

We're big fans of Cammy here at SSM, so are more than happy to see this teenage totty appearing in SFA3. Kitted out in her X-Men vs Street Fighter togs, Cammy retains her Spin Dive Smasher, loses her Bison Call-In, and gains two stunning new Super Moves, the Reverse Shaft Breaker and Phantom Riot. However, what's not known is whether her mysterious relationship with M Bison remains or if she's managed to break the psycho's mental grip on her.







E HONDA



Okay, he's fat and he wears a skirt, but in the hands of a warrior, E Honda is lethal. Players will undoubtedly recall this character's devastating Thousand Hand Slap and Sumo Headbutt and remember that old thunder thighs was in fact a pretty tough cookie. Details of E Honda's Super Moves are sketchy at the moment, but we expect his inclusion in SFA3 to be a sign that he's as rock-hard as he ever was.





VEGA



The vain Spanish bullfighter returns yet again to wow his adoring fans and carve his opponents into pieces! Known as Balrog in Japan, Vega's fighting style is certainly original as he leaps across the screen, armed with deadly claws and speed to rival even Chun Li. Keep your eyes on those blades though and watch out for his devastating leap from the chainlink fence on his home stage...





CODY





Remember Cody from Capcom's 2D side-scrolling beat 'em up series, Final Fight? With his partner (Guy) already introduced into the SFA series, Capcom has dusted this fighter down and given him his own set of unique moves. Clad in a prison outfit and handcuffed (there are rumours that he was framed for kidnapping his Final Fight girlfriend, Jessica), Cody uses Dragon Punch variations and also picks objects up off the floor to use as projectiles. Sounds cool, but we want Mike Haggar!



KARIN



Sakura's main rival and a highly-spirited schoolgirl scrapper. Rumours circulating on the Internet over the past few months suggested that Karin would actually possess the same basic moves as Sakura, but Capcom has since altered her fighting techniques. Karin now boasts the ability to string multiple Super Moves together, guaranteed to cause massive damage! Initial playtesting reveals Karin's Fei Long-style of fighting as a number of her moves are three hit techniques, with the last hit of an attack altering depending on the final button pressed.





RAINBOW MIKA



Possibly trying out as Geri Halliwell's replacement in the Spice Girls, Rainbow Mika is in fact the female counterpart of beefy Russian wrestler Zangief. However, don't let her ridiculous costume fool you as Mika's repertoire of moves include a number of lethal holds, vicious grapples and devastating throws. We're betting Rainbow Mika will be a real fan favourite for a *ahem* couple of reasons...









DEEP FEAR

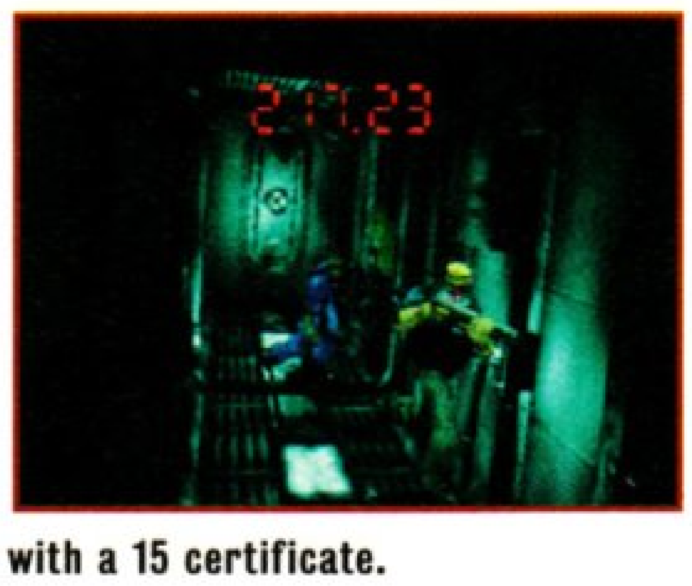


Poised to make a big splash on the Saturn scene this summer is Sega's answer to Capcom's illustrious Resident Evil series - Deep Fear. Moist with anticipation, LEE NOTTER takes a closer look.

The Saturn has been blessed with an excellent pedigree of adventure titles, with Resident Evil, Tomb Raider and Enemy Zero being some of the most visually impressive and supremely challenging games available on the system. Of course, the question we all want answered is where the hell is Resident Evil 2, confirmed on Capcom's release schedule, yet conspicuous by its absence at recent industry events.

The smart money is on a surprise appearance of a nigh-on complete version of Resident Evil 2 making an appearance at the Tokyo Game Show this October, but until then Sega has a surprise release to tide you over. First revealed in last month's issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, Deep Fear is the spine-tingling Resident Evil clone being hotly tipped for success this summer. Boasting a gripping storyline, fantastic visuals and gore aplenty, it should prove to be a worthy alternative to Capcom's long-awaited gore fest.





▲ Expect the BBFC to badge Deep Fear with a 15 certificate.




▼ You get a real sense of claustrophobia playing Deep Fear.



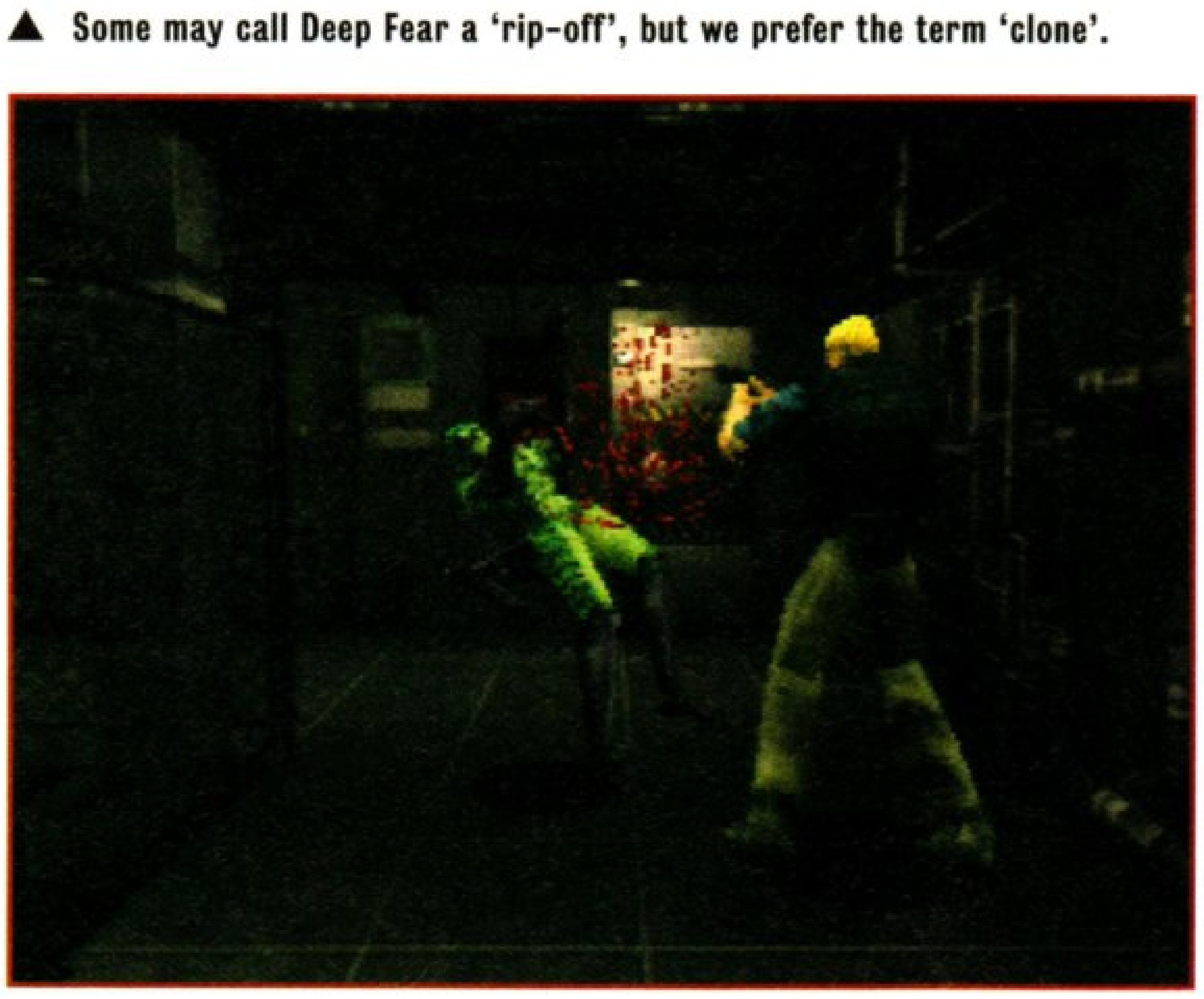
BE AFRAID...

Most reasonably informed readers should have a pretty good idea of what to expect from Deep Fear. As a member of the ERS (Emergency Rescue Service), players are called upon to investigate a series of bizarre mishaps in the vast underwater base, known as Big Table. A downed UFO with alien inhabitants, a runaway nuclear stealth submarine, a Navy cover-up and a US government conspiracy... what does it all mean? That's for you to find out... and quickly!

For the most part, the gameplay is of the kill-or-be-killed variety, with players being stalked throughout the enormous underwater base by a continuous onslaught of genetically mutated monsters. One minute you'll be talking to a scientist about the location of a life-saving antidote, the next he's sprouted tentacles and is trying to suck your brains out through your nose. So locating the more powerful weapons hidden around the base quickly becomes a priority, upgrading your puny Glock pistol to a more powerful MP-5 Sub-machine gun or Colt M1991A1. This gives way to sickeningly violent Resident Evil-style battles, with the extra-terrestrial monsters invariably spurting huge quantities of blood all over the place before their demise.




▲ Some may call Deep Fear a 'rip-off', but we prefer the term 'clone'.





▲ With a staggering range of genetically mutated monsters to overcome, collecting more powerful weapons quickly becomes a priority.



BE VERY AFRAID...

But there's much more to Deep Fear than just no-brainer shoot 'em up action. As tough talking ERS Chief and former Navy

Boasting a gripping storyline, fantastic visuals and gore aplenty, Deep Fear should prove to be a worthy alternative to Capcom's title.



▲ Hats off to Sega's team of in-house developers for producing a top-quality action/adventure title. If only Deep Fear had arrived a couple of years ago, Sega might not have found itself in its current predicament.



▲ As you'd expect from a Resident Evil clone, there's gore aplenty in Deep Fear!



▲ A PAL conversion should be fairly swift, given that all the dialogue is already in English.



▲ Deep Fear 2 on Dreamcast? Stranger things have happened....

SEAL, John Mayor, there's a diverse range of head-scratching puzzles to overcome. Many of these are of the typical 'pull lever to open the secret door/restore the power/drain the water' variety, but later conundrums require a great deal more thought to successfully overcome. Disarming nuclear submarines, negotiating laser protected rooms and mixing hazardous chemical formulas are just a handful of the brain-teasers awaiting you.

I CAN'T BREATH!

Only it's not quite that simple. You see, the limited oxygen supply within the vast underwater base is slowly depleting, suffocating those trapped inside unless something is done. So it quickly becomes a race against the clock to locate the air supply units and restore the power to them (for a short while at least). These also act as much-needed save points, allowing players to return to that position should they later take a turn for the worse. Failure to reach the air supply units in time results in the rapid depletion of your energy bar until your untimely death. This adds a very real sense of urgency to Deep Fear, something that's sorely missing from both Tomb Raider and Resident Evil.



The restricting time limit adds a real sense of urgency to the game, something sorely lacking from Resident Evil and Tomb Raider.

GRAPHICS TO DIE FOR

When it comes to the game's visuals, Saturn owners needn't have any worries about Deep Fear. Though not quite in the same league as Resident Evil, we doubt anyone will have any complaints. The pre-rendered backgrounds look fantastic, from the metallic submarine to the dark and dingy laboratories, the level of depth and detail to each of the scenarios is incredible. But the real stars of the show are without a doubt the monsters, created by the same guy responsible for the fantastic creature designs of last summer's blockbuster movie, Men in Black. It's almost a shame to kill them.

RESIDENT EVIL OR DEEP FEAR?

Our first impressions are that there is very little to choose between these two remarkably similar action/adventure titles. Both revolve around suitably ridiculous storylines which wouldn't be out of place in the forthcoming X-Files movie, they each thrive on their tense atmospheres and over-the-top gore and feature equally appaling, yet unintentionally humorous voice actors. Both games adopt the same style of visuals, with 3D polygon characters overlaid on pre-rendered



▲ For some strange reason, using weapons drains the oxygen level in the underwater base.





▲ Be warned... nothing is quite what it appears to be in Deep Fear...





▲ Excellent ambient sound effects add to the tense atmosphere.







▲ The enormous Tyrant-style boss character in all his gory.

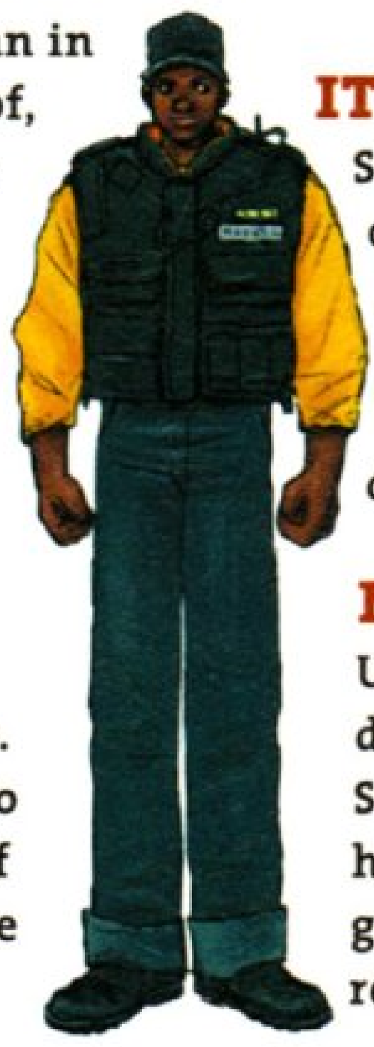
▼ The harpoon gun is used in the underwater stages to battle the extraterrestrial monsters.



The stars of the show are the monsters, created by the same guy responsible for the creature designs of the Men in Black movie!

backgrounds. Though in all honesty, we'd have to say that Capcom's title appears to have a slight edge over Deep Fear in this particular area, benefiting from superior character animation and more detailed backgrounds. The all-important body count appears to be greater in Resident Evil than in the early version of Deep Fear we've taken delivery of, though it's clear that the monsters in Sega's title are somewhat more spectacular.

Sega's coders also appear to have done a better job of progressing the plot through some of the most fantastic rendered sequences we've ever seen on the Saturn, with more twists and turns than an episode of Dynasty. And it has to be said that Deep Fear is less straightforward than Capcom's flagship title, with some huge brain-busting puzzles and a diverse range of tasks for players to get to grips with. So which one is likely to come out on top? It's just too early to say. Certainly Sega have their work cut-out if they are to topple the mighty Resident Evil, but we're confident of a top release.



IT'S NEARLY FINISHED!

So how's it shaping up? Well there are a few areas of concern in Deep Fear, notably the low body count, irritating loading times and linear nature of the gameplay. But as we speak, Sega's bunch of in-house programmers are working hard on rectifying these problems and are confident of producing an awe-inspiring adventure!

NEXT MONTH...

Unlike the flurry of recent Japanese releases which are destined to remain import-only, Sega Europe has assured SSM that Deep Fear will definitely receive a UK release, hopefully around mid-September. That means if everything goes according to plan, we'll have the exclusive Deep Fear review in the next supersoaraway issue!



▲ We don't think any readers will have any complaints with the quality of the visuals.

STORY-TELLING FMV

We're not entirely keen on these FMV sequences here at SSM. They rarely prove useful, take bloody ages to load and feature irritatingly over-emphasised hand gesticulations. Not so with Deep Fear. The story-advancing full-motion video sections interrupt the game at certain key moments, revealing valuable snippets of information to enable you to progress further into Deep Fear. The computer-generated sequences are also some of the most visually impressive we've seen on the Saturn to date, not quite up their with Team Andromeda's masterpieces, but pretty eye-popping nevertheless.







▲ Take a look at this fantastic FMV. There's loads more of it in Deep Fear.

BY	SEGA	
RELEASE	AUTUMN '98	PLAYERS: 1
HARDWARE	PRICE: IMPORT	
N/A	STYLE: RPG	

It's by Sega, it uses a slightly darker version of the Shining Force III engine, it looks all moody and it's got a weird semi-comic Japanese title. What more do you need to know about this cyber-punk RPG?

Wachenröder



▲ Moody cut scenes add to the game's gloomy atmosphere.



▲ Talking to all and sundry progresses the game's plot.

If we had a list of Japanese games with funny names, Wachenröder would be pretty near the top. And if we had another list featuring "fantasy cyber-punk" RPGs, Wachenröder would be in that one too. It would even make our list of games set in the future... so, a list of futuristic fantasy cyber-punk RPGs with silly names would, quite possibly, only have one entry - Wachenröder.

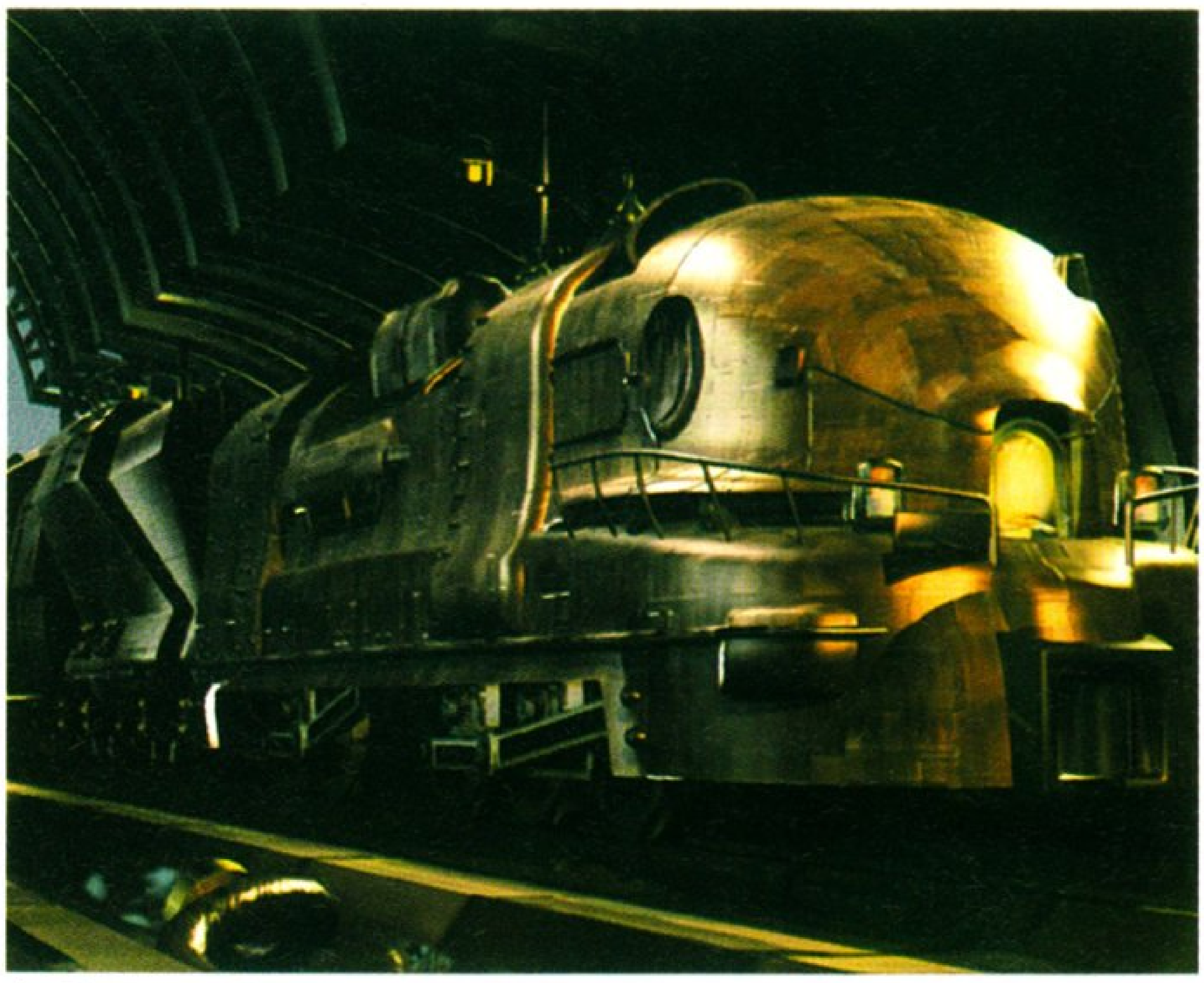
The game is set in a curiously cyber-punky version of the future, where, for some dodgy reason, steam power is their number one source of energy. This has a cool effect on the graphics though, as some of the creaky machines and huge contraptions really contribute to the dark atmosphere of the game. The graphics are a rather cool mixture of computer generated backgrounds and mini models, which were designed and animated by some of Japan's top anime designers, before being filmed and incorporated into the game. These super-detailed models look great, and combined with the gloomy nature of the rest of the game's visuals, Wachenröder becomes a graphically impressive game import game.



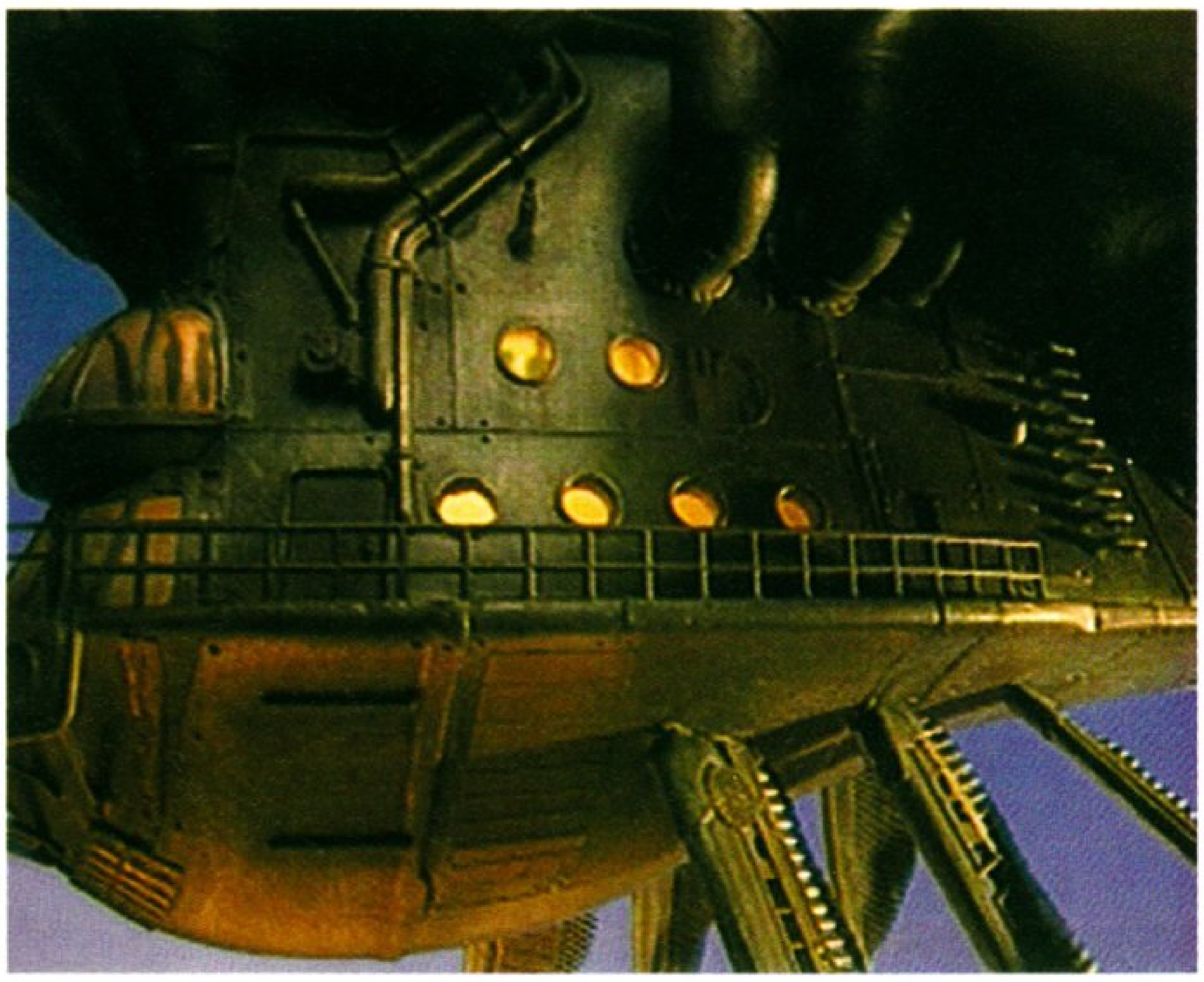
This turn-based RPG is a pretty unique proposition, enhancing the usual SFIII-style action with a heavier leaning on the exploration angle, and a darker, more industrial setting in place of the usual elf-packed greenery. With, as you'd expect, extra weapons and items-a-plenty found and equipped along the way, with each character having a decent range of specific weapons and skills to use.

The game itself is centered around two main characters, Lucian and Carol, who live on a small, fog-shrouded island off the mainland of a more advanced country. This more technical civilisation had developed nuclear power, but suddenly fell into obscurity, leaving the current generation to puzzle over the workings of this ancient gear. The game sees the characters travelling to the mainland, rediscovering the past and getting into all sorts of Famous Five-style scrapes and adventures. Gosh Julian, what an awfully exciting game!

[Mix cyber-punk styling with Shining Force III RPG battles and Wachenröder's the result.]



▲ Taking its cue from the amazing machinery in Squaresoft's Final Fantasy VII...



▲ ...Wachenröder's hardware also boasts that rusted old steam punk technology.



TOP MODELS

To give Wachenröder its unique look, the game's coders recruited a few top designers straight from the Japanese anime scene, to actually build some incredibly detailed scale models of the characters, the main areas of the scenery and the larger machines. These were then used as the basis for the design of the in-game characters, allowing for a better use of scale and some top-quality levels of detail. Pretty cool, eh?



But that's no use to you at the start, as all of the characters' weapons are clunky old steam-powered devices, adding an extra level to the combat as all weapons need to be monitored and kept at operating temperature, or they may over-heat and fail to work in a crucial battle moment. There are also many other items of machinery lying around - learning to operate these is another important part of the challenge.

The graphics seem to be running on a version of the Shining Force III engine, with the same cool isometric viewpoint in the locations screens, which switches to a nicely hi-res one-on-one clip when blows are traded. The special effects and character close-ups aren't quite as impressive as the ones seen in Shining Force III though, with the steam-powered weapons just not having the same scope for action as the SFIII magicians had.

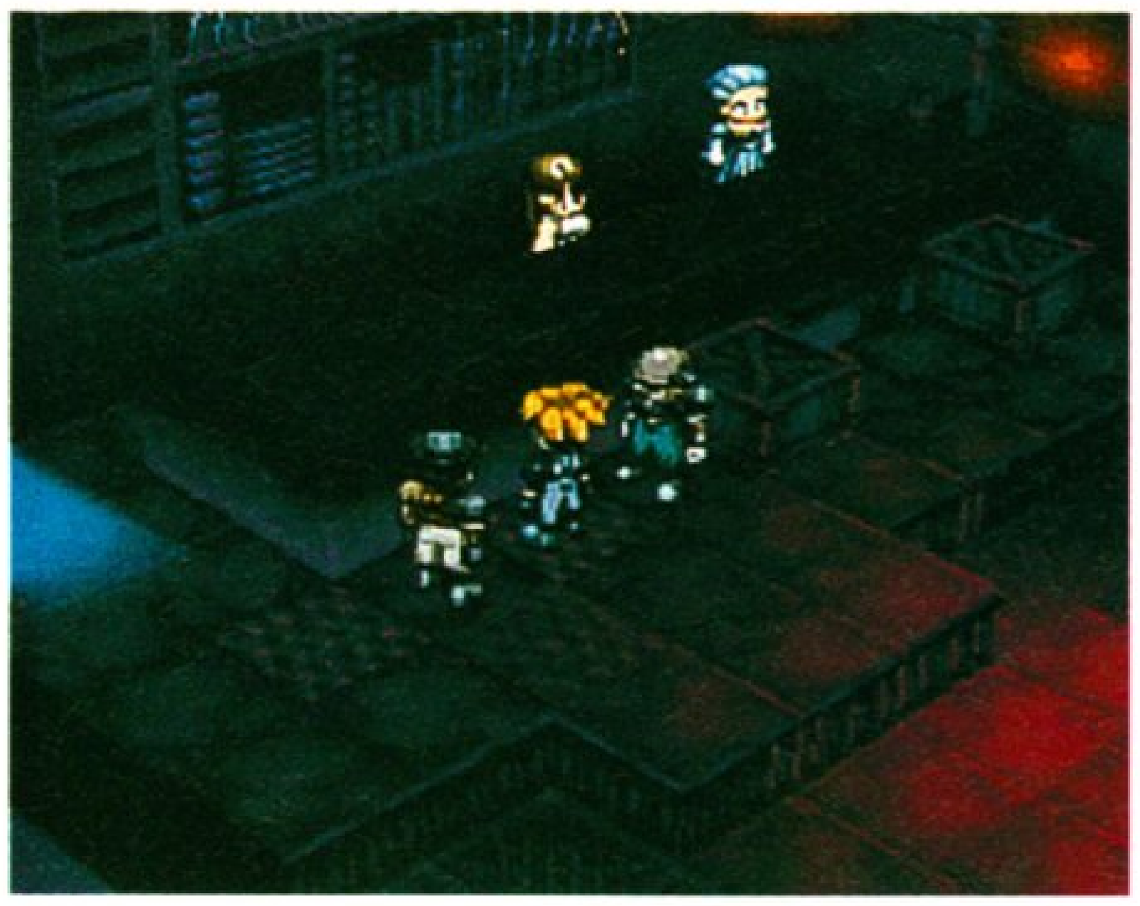
The gameplay boasts more of an emphasis on discovering and activating old machinery than simply searching and fighting, with some gigantic and mysterious gear waiting to be found. By experimenting with the machinery you discover, new areas become accessible, with some fantastically animated on-screen action as the ancient machines are reactivated and start to move again. And it looks like being a massive challenge too... are you looking for a huge, steam-powered, futuristic, Japanese cyber-punk RPG? There's only one on the list.







▲ If you're a fan of Shining Force III and Dragon Force, then Wachenröder should be right up your street.



▲ Wachenröder bears more than a resemblance to SFIII.





▲ Help Lucian and Carol rediscover ancient technology.



▲ Wachenröder boasts many traditional RPG trappings.



▲ Want more Wachenröder coverage? Drop us a line!

BY	HUDSONSOFT		
RELEASE	OUT NOW	PLAYERS	2
HARDWARE	N/A	PRICE	IMPORT
		STYLE	STRATEGY RPG

Collectible card games are all the rage in the US and Japan at the moment... honest. Straying from its popular Bomberman series, HudsonSoft mixes this hot hobby with RPG elements and here's the result.

Shadows of the Tusk



▲ Magical characters use mystic shields for protection.



▲ Above-Left: In Story Mode, players battle through an ancient kingdom in search of a powerful weapon.



As if previewing indecipherable Japanese titles was bad enough, we'll attempt to totally confuse our readers this month by taking a look at a game that combines elements of RPGs, strategy games and those pesky collectible card games. Shadows of the Tusk is the latest offering from those Bomberman stalwarts, HudsonSoft, and represents something of a departure for this plucky developer usually more at home with handling fast-paced, explosive action. Shadows of the Tusk is essentially a turn-based strategy game where players assemble a collection (or deck) of warriors and battle opponents in armed combat.

Combat takes place on 5 x 5 fixed grid as warriors move and position their fantasy fighters in order to gain maximum potential in the ensuing battles. Character sprites are 2D and boast only minimal animation, making the game look even more like its card based counterpart, but some cool magical effects are visible. Speaking of magic, each character has a number of special powers and spells at their disposal, some of which are used to reduce an enemy's HP (Hit Points) and others are used to boost a player's attributes and specific abilities. For instance, flying characters are capable of increasing their range, barbarians gain greater strength and magic users are capable of accessing even more powerful spells.



By defeating opponents in battle, players then gain that character as a card to add to their collection. It's possible to build up a deck of over 100 cards, although only a handful of these may be used in any battle. Of course, repeated use of characters builds up their many attributes, and boosts their Mana levels. As in many fantasy games, Mana is used as a magical life energy source and often incorporated into a character's armour and weapons. Mana is awarded to players as experience points for successful battles and possession of vast quantities of this powerful substance makes any warrior a true RPG master.

GET YOURSELF CONNECTED

In Japan and the US, Sega released the X-Band modem as an add-on a few years ago, enabling players to connect with each other over the 'net and play the likes of Sega Rally and Virtual On. Shadows of the Tusk also supports this feature although only Japanese gamers will be able to take advantage of this option. Sega Europe never released the X-Band modem over here and it's easy to see why. Slow network connections and a lack of quality software meant this add-on never sold well enough to deserve a UK launch.








▲ One of the game's few redeeming features is its superb TrueMotion cutscenes. Silky smooth and motion-captured, they're well worth multiple viewings.




▲ Dungeons and dragons and er... dodgy old geezers.



WHAT A CARD!

From Star Wars to TSR's Dungeons and Dragons, collectible card games are big business these days. Older readers will undoubtedly remember Top Trumps from years ago, with card sets such as "The World's Top 100 Monsters" which featured Dracula and pals. By pitting character's powers and abilities against each other, players won cards from one another. Today's collectible card games are slightly different though, with each player utilising a number of characters, locations and actions to undertake adventures and battles. In Japan, the popular Shadows of the Tusk card game is published by Susumu Matsushita Company. So there.





▲ "Taste my fireball, you foul miscreant!" RPG fans are a passionate lot. Well, in their dreams at least...

Comparisons with other Saturn RPGs are virtually nonexistent, in fact Shadows of the Tusk bears more of a resemblance to HudsonSoft's very own Bomberman Wars than the likes of Shining Force III. Both titles use turn based battles and grids, with teams of opposing warriors slugging it out for supremacy, and it appears that HudsonSoft have even gone so far as to use the same basic game engine in both titles. Now there's no doubt in our mind that Shadows of the Tusk will probably sell pretty well in Japan, where sales of collectible card games are currently going through the roof, but even the most enthusiastic UK Saturn owners will find this title tough going. If you own a converted machine and fancy a spot of Japanese RPG action, we recommend you check out the likes of Dragon Force II or Phantasy Star Collection.

> [Shadows of the Tusk should **appeal to anorak** types who believe **Goblins really exist...**]







▲ Attempt to strike enemies from the rear and they lose more hit points. It's a bit sneaky, but what the heck.







BY	GAME ARTS		
RELEASE	OUT NOW		PLAYERS
HARDWARE	PRICE	IMPORT	1
N/A	STYLE	RPG	

You might think it's just a gallery of Grandia artwork and game data.. but you'd be wrong! Despite its name, this title gives you stuff to do - not just to look at! It's what we really want, and that's more Grandia!

Grandia Digital Museum



▲ The Digital Museum's artwork gallery is located here.



▲ Working out how to get down from here is a major task.



▲ This all-new Dungeon level is one of the easier stages.

As an ever-swelling number of SSM readers rush out to add Grandia to their import gaming libraries, one thing is clear: despite the vast swathes of Japanese text, this game is simply astounding. It's so brilliant in fact, that just working your way through it without any idea of the plot remains one of the most satisfying games experiences on Sega Saturn!

We can only imagine 'what might have been' had Sega Europe the requisite funds to bring Grandia to us game-starved European players, but the bottom line is that it's still worth buying. And so is this stunning Digital Museum.

Game Arts' classic RPG took a mammoth five years to create, originally starting life as a Mega-CD product. Every tiny facet of the game's creation was given the most painstaking attention possible, even down to the firm enlisting the aid of Skywalker Sound (yes, the Star Wars people) to produce the astounding Surround Sound effects. What Game Arts have done is to produce an actual game to show off this senses-shattering production process.

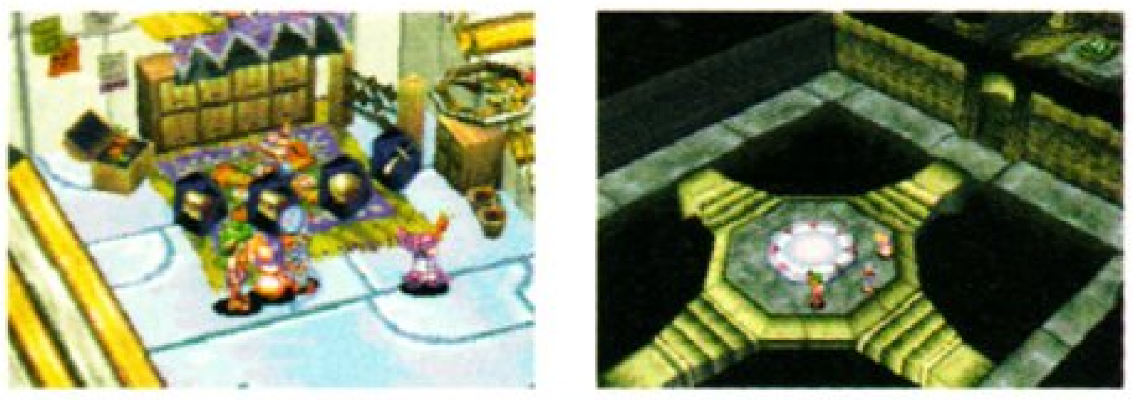


▲ Grandia's 'Alente' level looks very similar to the museum.

The game starts off in the Grandia Digital Museum, populated by the lovable characters from the original game. They look after individual sections of the library, encompassing the game itself and its denizens along with original production artwork, sounds and such-and-such. There's only one problem - just about all of the exhibits are missing! Justin, Fina and Sue (the trio of heroes from the main game) decide to enter enemy territory to bring the museum's artifacts back to where they belong!



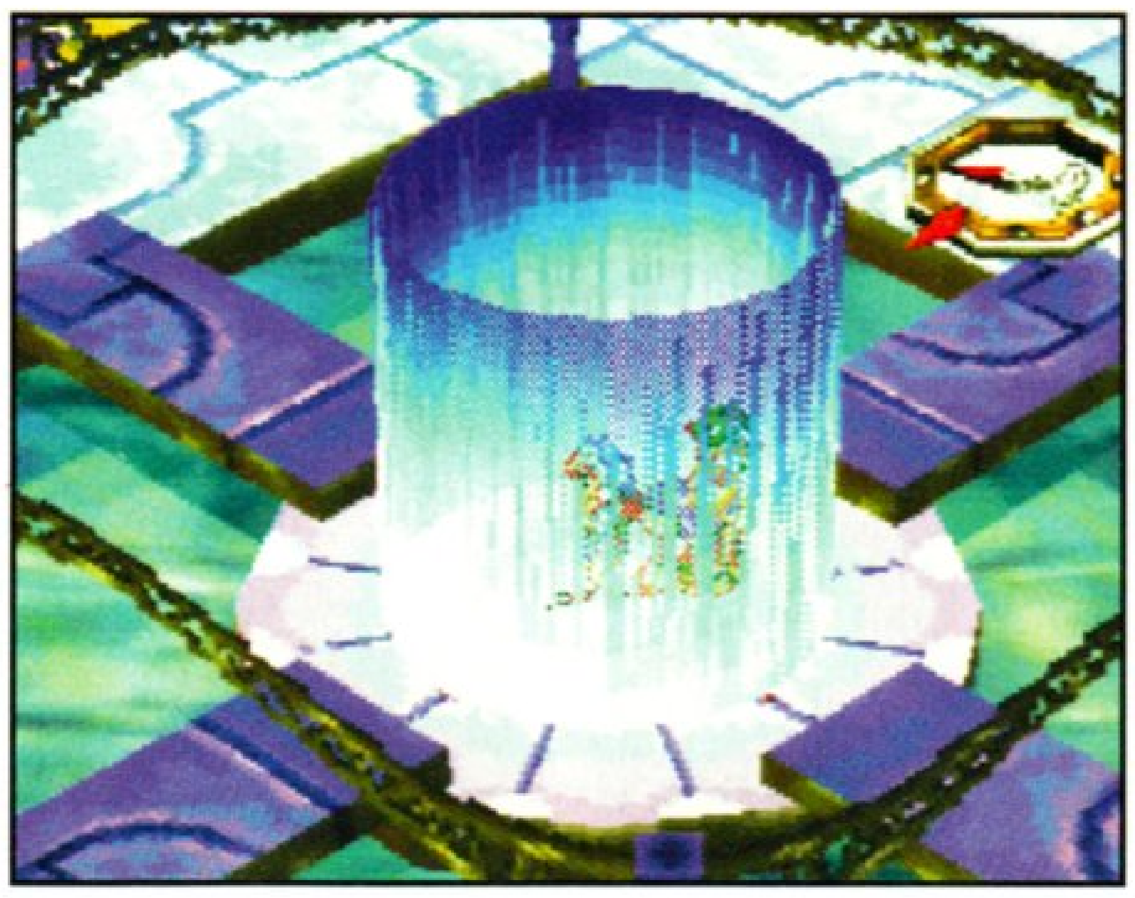
▲ Fight! The Museum's combat is the same as Grandia's.



▲ More new level action - you can't beat that.

GETTING ABOUT

Once you leave the museum proper you enter an area of portals. Each of these in turn takes you to another land, kind of like the field sections in Grandia. These areas are populated with some of the game's toughest monsters and they jealously covet the objects you wish to return to the museum. So you can expect a bit of the old fisticuffs as well then in addition to the logic puzzles that were Grandia's hallmark. The first picture to the right shows the portals working in all their wonder - it's just like one of the transporters from Star Trek. After that, you choose your level!



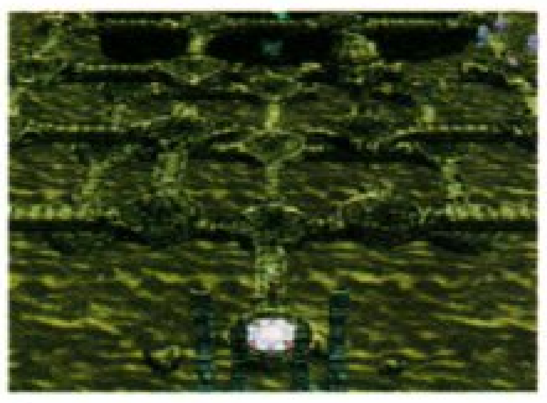




▲ Despite its status as a mere 'museum', Game Arts hasn't skimped on amazing graphics for the new levels...

What this basically boils down to is Grandia - and more of it! For people who've bested the original game, this Digital Museum is a dream come true. Not only do you get more gameplay (and believe us when we say that there is LOTS of it), you also get all the brilliant museum stuff - soundtracks, original art. It looks rather spectacular really.

But is it worth buying? In our considered view, it's going to be something of a mystery to those of us who haven't waded their way through the original game, but for those who did, it's going to be something of an essential buy. It's NOT just a museum where you walk around looking for things, it's a cool game in its own right and perhaps more importantly, it's MORE Grandia! The bottom line is that you can't really go wrong with that...





▲ All-new levels - just what the Grandia player demands!

[Game Arts' classic RPG took a mammoth five years to create, check this to find out why!]

ARCADE CLASSICS

The Grandia Digital Museum is something of a progressive establishment in that it has a video arcade on one of its floors! This highlights some of the more arcadier sections of the original game, but to begin with it only allows you to play one simple title: the wash-the-decks sub-game (hardly epoch-making stuff). However, on the brighter side there are bound to be more games to find and when you play them the game obligingly saves off your top scores!

1



2



AMAZING ART!

Want to know how Grandia ended up looking so spectacularly cool? Well, a small visit to the artwork section of the Digital Museum should soon end your lust for answers - ALL of the original production art is stored here, scanned in and reproduced in super high-resolution. When you see the attention to detail these guys put into their game, it will make you appreciate the classic RPG all the more!

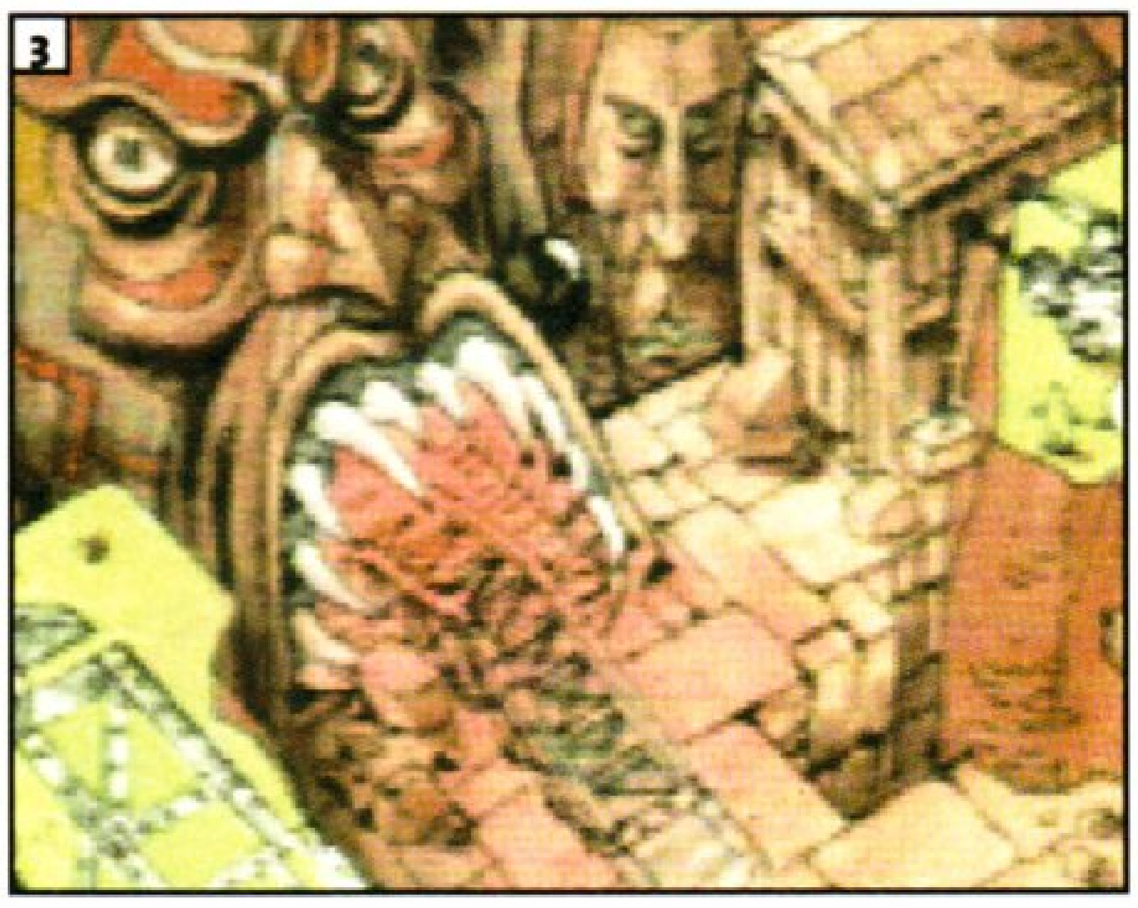
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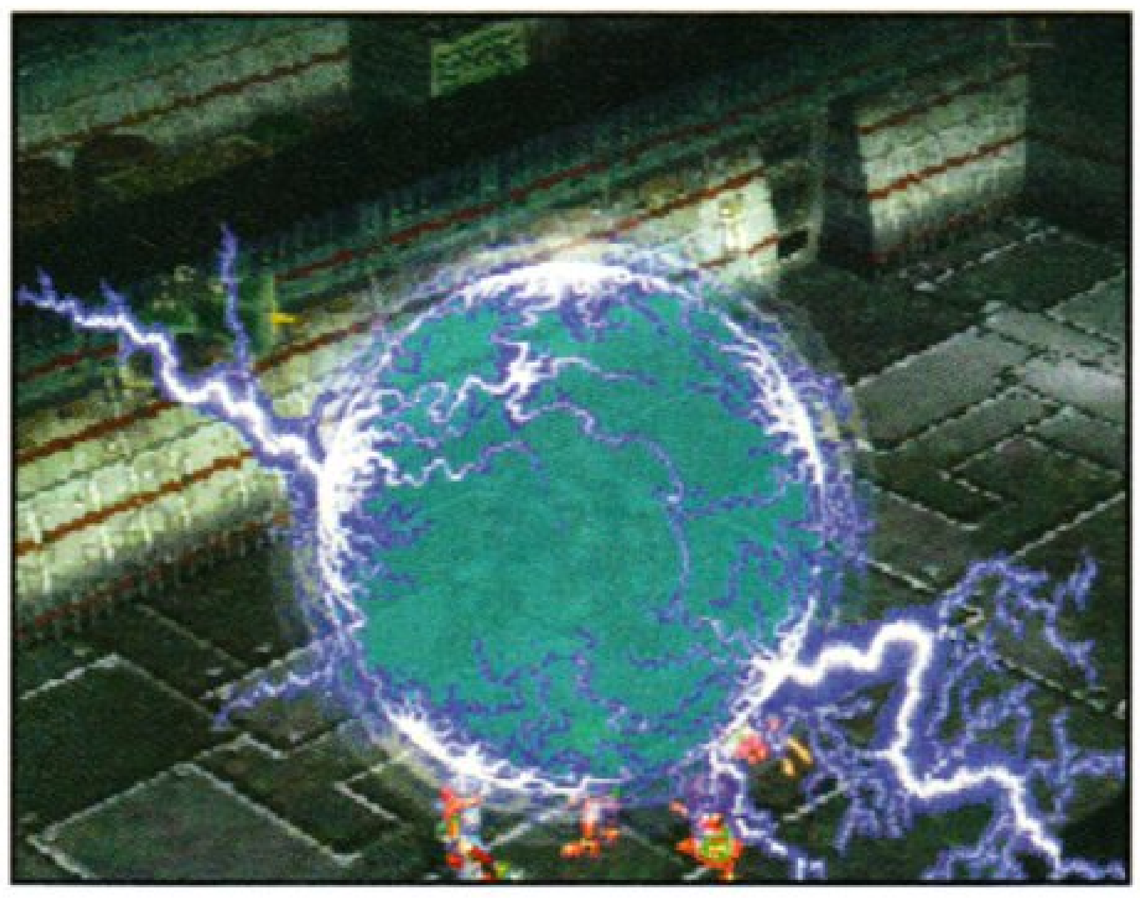


3



MORE FIGHTING

There's no doubt about it - finding those Grandia artifacts is not going to be very easy, especially when those horrific monsters are guarding them so closely. A bit of fighting is obviously required, and Grandia players will be easily at home with the system - being that it's identical to the original! Luckily, the Digital Museum also sports a shop where you can buy extra-powerful weaponry using the cash of vanquished foes. Additionally, all your characters start out at level 25, meaning that they're rock-hard... which is just as well considering the power of the monsters





BY	CAPCOM		
RELEASE	TBA	PLAYERS	3
HARDWARE	N/A	PRICE	IMPORT
		STYLE	SHOOT 'EM UP

Capcom has just announced plans for more in its awesome Generations series, showcasing its early coin-op heritage. Now we know the full line-up, along with details on the return of Commando and Mercs!

Capcom Generation Vol 4

MERCS (1990)

By 1990, Capcom had progressed to its then super-advanced CP-System I technology. This allowed for far more detailed graphics along with (get this) simultaneous three-player action! Mercs is essentially Commando with tons more to do - including power-up weapons, vehicles to commandeer (yes!) and far more interactive scenery.



GUNSMOKE (1985)

Arriving in the same year as Commando, Gunsmoke was essentially the same game albeit with a Wild West environment and more advanced gameplay. Three buttons allowed you to shoot in three directions, and multiple power-ups and bosses added greatly to the game.

Just as SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE went to press, we received full details on the entire range of Capcom Generations compilation CDs. The full list is located somewhere on this page (and you can be sure that we'll be exposing the full contents of the third pack in a forthcoming edition of SSM) and we can expect the first pack, incorporating 1943, to crop up in Japan hopefully by the time you read this.

Now the full range is announced we have to admit that there was some element of disappointment in the SSM camp when we discovered that the likes of Bionic Commando, Strider and Final Fight were not to be represented, with Capcom concentrating on the earlier games (barring the Street Fighter II compilation) that established their coin-op credentials in the mid to late eighties.

The games on offer in Volume 4 are still great though. Commando remains one of the most enjoyable shoot 'em ups devised, mostly down to its incessant pace and stirring soundtrack. Whatever sound chip Capcom used in those days, it certainly did the job in providing some very impressive tunes... a fact rammed home in the pseudo-sequel Gunsmoke.



▲ Expect pixel-perfect Saturn renditions of these classics!



▲ Five years' difference: Commando (left), Mercs (right).

This game was clearly from the same stable, and had the player hunting down big name Wild West criminals and butchering them in exchange for blood money. However, the addition of power- ups and bosses had a great effect on the game. Capcom also upped the difficulty level - it's a lot, lot harder than Commando.

The final game revealed on the fourth Generations pack is an old favourite - Mercs. Capcom took the basic premise of Commando (alone behind enemy lines) and strengthened it with superlative graphics (for the time), simultaneous three-player action plus TONS more action. We're talking a festival of explosive action and some excellent new



▲ Gunsmoke: no, it really is a very playable blaster!



▲ Commando looks basic graphically, but it plays well!



▲ Gunsmoke added to Commando with bosses (right).





COMMANDO (1985)

One of the best vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups of its time, Commando pitted one player (that'll be you then!) against an entire army, armed just with a rapid-fire machine gun and a clutch of hand grenades. You could well describe as this having pulse-pounding shoot 'em up action, and relentless (but at the same time excellent) music!



◀ Wondering why all the screenshots have an odd shape? It's because the original coin-ops had vertical monitors. Does this mean black strips filling the space on Saturn?

weapons to collect, including split three-way fire and the mainstay of shooters to come, the flamethrower. There are some decent bosses in this game too, including a VTOL Harrier jumpjet and a massive tank. Clearly Capcom was influenced by SNK's Commando clone Ikari Warriors, which allowed you to purloin enemy vehicles and use them for your own ends - yup, you can do this too in Mercs!

Overall then, Capcom Generations looks like living up to its early promise. This shooting collection and the platforming behemoth that is the Ghouls 'n' Ghosts package are well worth the time and effort... let's hope that Capcom adds to the Generations excitement with conversions of some of its later coin-ops - we'd love to see Willow, Black Tiger and the Punisher in addition to the games mentioned earlier and the ones confirmed... Capcom has a rich arcade pedigree and we fans request - nay demand! - more Saturn-based retro action!

In the meantime, expect SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE to continue its coverage of all things Capcom. We're still trying to line-up an interview with the R&D staff in Japan, and next month we'll be taking an in-depth look at Pocket Fighter, the latest in the firm's 4MB RAM cart series.

So let us rejoice! Capcom is still in the Saturn business and the games are excellent!

[The full power of Capcom's retro packs is finally revealed - Generations rocks!]

Those Five Generation Packs in Full

1. 1942, 1943, 1943 Special
2. Ghosts 'n' Goblins, Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts (yes... yes... *yes*... YES!)
3. Exed Exes, Vulgus, Son Son, Higemaru
4. Commando, Gunsmoke, Mercs
5. Street Fighter II, SF Champion Edition, SF Turbo



▲ More vertically scrolling action in the ace Mercs!



▲ Gunsmoke (left) and Commando (right): great games!



▲ Yup, Mercs is the highlight of Volume 4 of this pack!

Virtua Writer™

Welcome to the Virtua Writer pages! This month we have a bit of treat - LEE NUTTER IS ON HOLIDAY! Yup, that means that Rich has the single honour of picking the letters and providing responses as only he can. So obviously the letters page is about 100 times better than usual, or is it? You tell us! Send in stuff about the mag, about Dreamcast, about Saturn to VIRTUA WRITER, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, London E14 9TZ or email virtua.writer@ecm.emap.com. All we ask is this: no whinging or complaining: the future's looking amazing and we want your views!

DREAMCAST OUTPOURINGS START HERE

Richard,

I have never felt the urge to write to a computer magazine before today. However after seeing what Sega is trying to do with Dreamcast I feel I can hold back no longer.

I have been a Sega fan for nearly the last ten years and can honestly say that I have never seen the company put so much effort into getting something right. Dreamcast WILL be the number one console by Christmas 1999 of that I have no doubt. Everything I that has been shown on the 'net about Dreamcast has been complimentary. UNLIKE when the Saturn was launched, there have been no doubts about the performance of the hardware and the demos (assuming they were realtime) were amazing.





A 3D Sonic Dreamcast title would kick major league ass!

All Sega need now is five or ten quality titles and the "mass-market" that is currently tiring of Sony's endless drivel, will be theirs for the taking.

So here's hoping for NiGHTS 2, Sonic 3D, a Team Andromeda masterpiece and a handful of the games that have made AM2/3 famous. Sega may have lost its way with the Saturn, but the testing times we have endured will soon be over.

To all at SSM keep up the outstanding work and thank you for the entertainment and invaluable information your mag provides.

Jamie Hall, via email

All I have to add to your outstanding missive is this: games like NiGHTS, Sonic and Panzer just weren't enough to sell the Saturn, regardless of their obvious quality. What we really need is a range of mass market titles as well to bring in the casual gamers that moved from Megadrive to PlayStation (instead of Saturn). But as you would have read in the last issue of SSM, Sega know this and they won't let us down. RICH

DREAMCAST WORRIES

Dear SSM,

I have owned a Sega Saturn for years and have 15 games for it and I reckon it's a truly excellent machine. Personally I don't think much of the PlayStation. It is an okay machine, but it doesn't have the special edge that the Saturn has. I won't even bother mentioning the N64.

There are just a few things I am worried about with Sega. Will Sega's new Dreamcast console end up the same way as the Saturn? I'm sure it will not, but I'm also sure that it will end up in a big scrap with the PlayStation 2. People will assume that the PlayStation 2 will be the better of the two, plus Sony will advertise a hell of a lot. This isn't going to be good for Sega, unless they have a massive advertising campaign to support Dreamcast. Just think what will happen to Sega if they lose their Dreamcast too!

All I want is for Sega to become number one in the videogame industry. I want to see Sega be the number one in Britain and I don't want to buy another computer that has been christened 'crap' right from the start. Don't get me wrong. The Saturn was and still is the best console you could buy and it still has some life left (but only until 1999 when Dreamcast finally appears in Europe).



Virtua Fighter 3: we want it on Dreamcast... NOW!

Oh yeah, I almost forgot to say that Europe's Dreamcast better not be slower than the Japanese version and it better not have massive borders. One last thing. Did you say that a boss in the advertising department at Sega Europe was sacked and replaced by some guy, who was supposed to get the Saturn back on track? I haven't seen an amazing recovery yet!

Alastair Fellowes, Aberdeen

Probably because the only bosses we tend to talk about crop up at the end of videogames! Presumably, our interview with Shoichiro Irimajiri last issue helped sort out your other fears. Rest assured, Sega's plan for Dreamcast is PERFECT in almost every detail! RICH

IS IT REALLY THAT POWERFUL?

Dear SSM,

I think we all know that the Saturn won't last until the Dreamcast comes out over here, so I was wondering what's going to happen between the end of the Saturn and the release of the next console? I know that all of you lot at SSM probably get it this year on import, but most people would rather have the UK version.

Another thing, Tony Mott said (on Digitiser) that the Dreamcast matches the performance of Model 2, but you said that it is better than Model 3. I hope that he is wrong because it would be a disappointment if we had poor conversions of VF3 etc.

Raymond Carrel, Glasgow

Tony Mott is a respected member of the video games community and is soon to return to Edge magazine as editor after a PR stint at Konami. Which is a good thing. However, I was surprised at these comments, and get the feeling that the Dreamcast feature in the current Edge (which I haven't seen yet) could well be a lot more positive. If the machine CAN'T do Model 3, we'll soon see when I expect Virtua Fighter 3 to premiere at the Tokyo Game Show in September, but I wouldn't worry about it if I were you... RICH

EVIDENCE OF PRIMITIVE HUMOUR

Dear SSM

So the new machine's called Dreamcast, huh? Can't say I think much of the name, but the specifications look tasty enough - 128-bit CPU, 3 million polygons per second, a meaty 16 megabytes of RAM, even a built-in modem (a tad low spec at 33.6Kbps, but still...) - does it make the tea as well, or will there be an add-on for this later? [*No you order your tea on the 'net - RICH*]

Seriously though, having seen the pictures of the beautiful beast on the always-excellent Game Online website, I was initially surprised by the lack of any Sega insignia on the machine. Is there a reason for this? Another thing I'm wondering is why Sega chose not to adopt the new Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) format. Also, considering Dreamcast's PC ancestry, is there any chance of a hard-drive peripheral appearing any time in the future?

'Til Hell freezes over!

Dale Ambosius, Liverpool

Sega President Shoichiro Irimajiri answered your question about the lack of Sega logo in the interview last issue - essentially, Dreamcast is the machine identity and Sega is the firm's games brand.

Sega chose its own CD system over DVD probably due to cost. They want the machine to be as cheap as possible... and what's the point of all that storage if it's just going to be used for full- motion video? The last "unofficial" Dreamcast spec I saw mentioned an IDE interface for attaching a hard drive, so who knows? I wouldn't put it past them. RICH

A NOT SO BRILLIANT PLAN

Dear SSM,

What about my brilliant plan? I sell my PlayStation now it's still popular, and start saving for the huge amount of money the Dreamcast is going to cost! In the meantime I keep playing my beloved Saturn games. When the Dreamcast is released, everybody is going to sell their consoles, because they all want to own the new miracle machine. Then I am laughing, because the sucker who bought my PlayStation wants to sell it too, and nobody wants to buy the machine anymore! By that time I'm playing VF3!

Gerard Blom, Sas van Gent.

Unless you're going to splurge on an import machine in November, I don't think you'll have to worry too much about the price of Dreamcast. If what I'm hearing is true (and it is), there's going to be some mega news come the European launch... RICH

FIRST IN THE WORLD ON THE 'NET!

Dear SSM,

I have to congratulate you on your coverage on the



The graphical potentials are unquantifiable!

Dreamcast system via Game Online. The system itself looks very sexy; the VMS looks like a very nice piece of equipment and the specs of the machine are awesome. But there is one problem, the pads.

Although the LCD screen and the NiGHTS style looks like a winner, Sega seems to have forgotten something. Do you know what that is? I'll tell you. There are only four buttons on the front of the pad! This might seem a stupid thing to say, but think about it, how are we going to play wicked Capcom games now we are two buttons down? All the forthcoming Street Fighter games are going to be a complete nightmare. All those who had the misfortune to play Street Fighter Alpha 2 on the PlayStation will know what I mean - it was a totally finger-knotting experience!

I know that everyone thought that the N64 pad was brilliant and Sega is trying to beat it. But please don't drop down to four buttons. There are probably shoulder buttons and about a thousand under the pad, but the main ones should be on the front where we really use them.

Thank you yet again for answering yet another one of my letters!

Simon Stallwood, via email

For those who don't know, Game Online had the full Internet scoop on the May 21 Dreamcast announcement and it was FIRST in the world with all the details! I was at the conference (which was in the hotel where I was staying) and having enjoyed the party, I just popped upstairs and wrote up the story for our site. Since then we've become the leader in 'net-based Dreamcast coverage. If you have Internet access, visit http://www.game-online.com immediately! You're not alone on the pad thing though, but before I annihilate your argument as only I can, let's listen to this fella... RICH

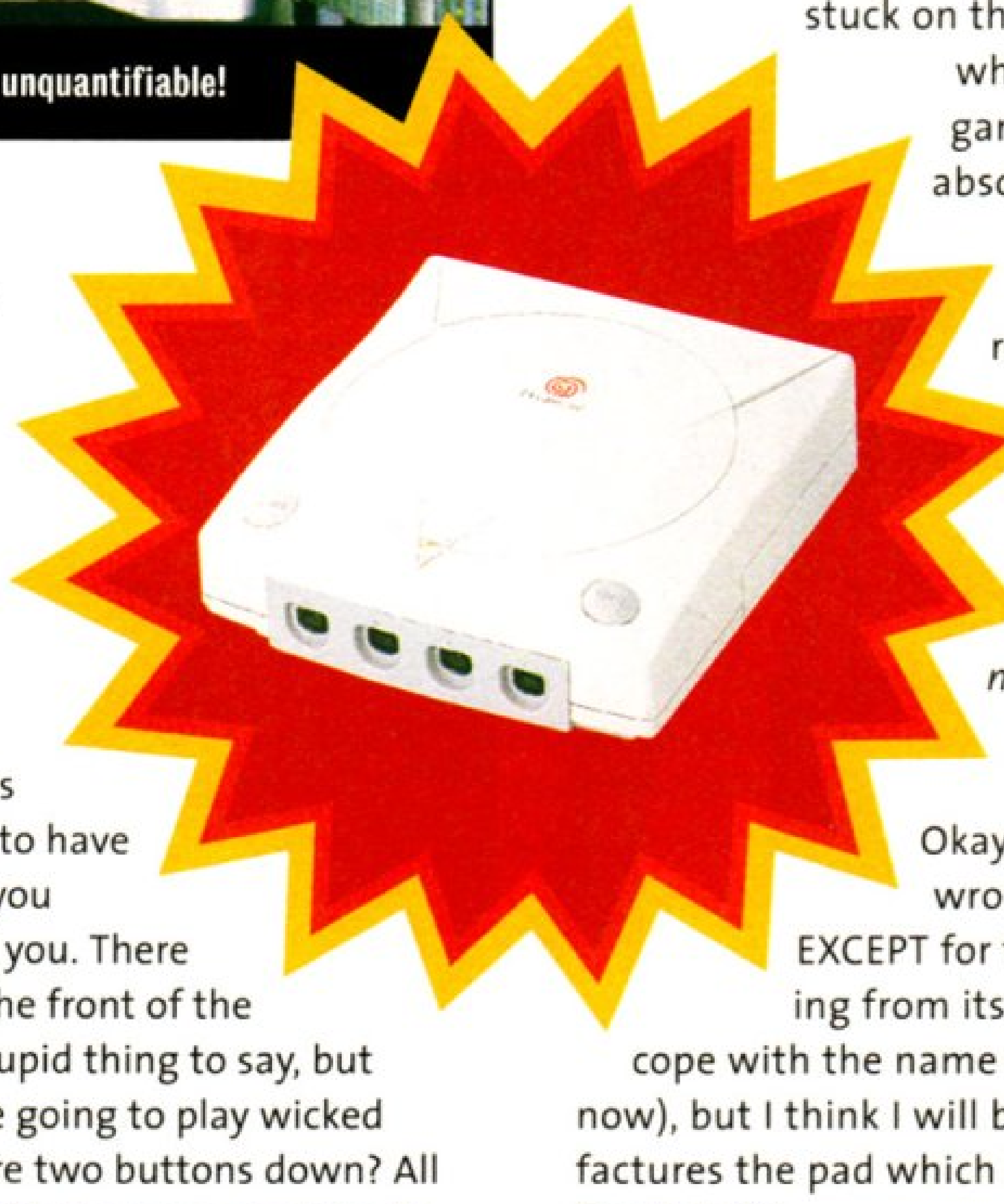
DREAMCAST PAD NIGHTMARE!

Dear SSM,

Okay, let's cut to the chase here. We all know how fantastic the Dreamcast is going to be, but it saddens me deeply that Sega is so willing to sever the connections with the Saturn as far as making the pads sub-standard! Whilst everything else about the machine is fantastic, the most basic things haven't been addressed with the pad...

Firstly: the number of buttons. Why? Why only four top buttons? Arggh! I know Sega is trying to streamline the pad by making it simpler, but it's the size of a small country - plenty of room for the two extra buttons! This is also discriminating against possibly Sega's greatest asset - Capcom! Capcom's games are a pain to play on PS, the pad just doesn't work for it! We need SIX buttons! SIX, DO YOU HEAR ME!! [*I think so - RICH*]

Secondly: the D-Pad! Overlooked, the D-Pad looks clunky and crappy. Just looking at it gives me nightmarish memories of the cheap piece of crap stuck on the far left of the N64 pad, which (of the three or so games that use it) feels absolutely dreadful. No Dragon Punches for us then. The Saturn (Jap-style) pad was renowned as being the finest for beat 'em ups, and anything 2D. What they have done to is insane! [*Er... how can you judge a pad that has never even been within a few thousand miles of your person? - RICH*]



Okay, that's my say. Don't get me wrong - I love the new pad, EXCEPT for those points! Sega is learning from its mistakes, it's true. I can cope with the name of Dreamcast (I quite like it now), but I think I will be quite upset if Sega manufactures the pad which is shown already!

Don't do it!

If there's ANY way we can write to Sega on this, please tell us how. (Am I alone on these opinions?)

Hayden Scott-Baron, Cheshire

Briefly...

Dear SSM

Everyone should subscribe to SSM, not only do you get your favourite mag on time and save money, but Rich gets his pay-cheque earlier and will be able to save up and get his holiday mansion earlier and have a well-earned break!

Madhu Sharma, Skelmersdale

Bah! Who needs a holiday mansion when you live in DoomBase - the single-most awesome abode in the Omniverse? RICH

Dear SSM

I like the way you are always taking the piss out of Lee Nutter, calling him a drunken, insane, bigfoot lookalike. (D'oh! Sorry Lee!)

Brad the Eggman, Hythe, Kent

At least he doesn't have to invent an unfunny "comedy" name for himself, Mr "Eggman". No, he inherited an even more terrific one! RICH

Dear SSM

Congrats on the absolutely, fantastically, brilliantly, ace mag. Especially Lee with his sensational wit.

Steven Oakden, Kington St Michael

I don't know about sensational wit, but I would say that Lee is indeed hilarious. And that statement is equally valid on so many levels! RICH

Dear SSM

I was up the town the other day pondering over the Saturn games on offer. Having played The House of the Dead in the arcades I was tempted to try the Saturn version, but your review score of 85% caused some doubt. I thought bugger it [*I wouldn't do that - RICH*] and bought it. [*Oh - RICH*]

When I got home I loaded it up - it's bloody brilliant! Not up to the standard of the arcade, but still excellent. Why the hell did you give it 85%? It deserves to be marked up by 10%, putting it in the upper echelons of excellence along with Virtua Cop 1 and 2.

John Heavy, Glasgow

Cough! Splutter! HotD ain't too bad, but comparing it to the Virtua Cop games is like comparing excrement to cream. RICH

Dear SSM

Having bought HotD I wasn't all that impressed. The arcade version was magnificent. The first time you play it, it's great, but it doesn't last. The gameplay and lastability just aren't there. Your cover-mounted Panzer Saga disc persuaded me to sell HotD and buy Panzer instead.

Mustan Chana, Derby.

The gameplay's got to be really special to ensure lastability in a genre such as this. That's why the Cop games are so much better, graphics apart. RICH

This is my first - and last - outburst on the subject of the Dreamcast pads... and remember that I've actually used them! For starters, Sega is aiming the Dreamcast at the mass market and its research found that the NiGHTS pad was waaay too complex for the casual gamer, hence the necessary streamlining. And another thing, do you really use the NiGHTS pad for Capcom fighting games? I can't stand using the "fat controller" for any fighting title, whether its a Capcom, SNK or an AM game. Bottom line: for those titles, you'd be better off getting the inevitable fighting pad, which I daresay will share a great deal in common with the current Saturn pad, which is nigh-on perfect for this purpose. Let that be an end to this debate - believe me, you're all moaning about nothing! RICH

WHAT NEXT FOR SSM?

Dear SSM,

I have been keeping up to date on the latest about the new Sega machine (Now called Dreamcast) and I was wondering as to whether SSM will be taking a role in becoming a Sega Saturn and Dreamcast magazine as I believe only an editorial team of your high standards are worthy enough to review, preview and talk about new games on the new machine.

Daniel Bell, Dorset



VF2: What Rich would doubtless call a "warrior's grab".

To SSM,

Okay, so Dreamcast is due in around 18 months, yeah? Then what is going to happen to you guys? The Saturn is almost dead in England now and you can't just cover imports, even they will dry up soon. We are facing a huge dilemma, but I'm sure you know that.

P Furley, York

This is just a sampling of the letters we've received about this subject and whilst I am reluctant to discuss details, I can firmly say that there are two possibilities concerning our future. Firstly, we can just take the year off and spend the time eating pies and fondling ourselves. OR we can concentrate on bringing you the very best Saturn coverage and the most detailed, in-depth and EXCLUSIVE Dreamcast pages right up until the official launch when something... wonderful... will happen. Take your pick. RICH

BARGAIN BASEMENT BONANZA

Dear SSM,

Just a quick note.

Recently I was out browsing through EB when I came across a Saturn and Virtua Fighter 2 for £64. I was looking at spending forty/fifty quid for a PC/PlayStation game so I thought what the hell? On getting home and plugging it in I was literally blown away with VF2. It makes Tekken 2 look really slow.

I managed to get hold of your mag - not that easy - [*it is if you subscribe - RICH*] and thought Panzer Dragoon Saga was ace. Since then I've managed to pick up Sega Rally (£9.99) - ace! and Daytona (£15) not so ace. The prices of the games are unbelievable. Sega Rally on my P233 sucks, but on the Saturn it's five times as fast [*it sucks on my P2-300 with Voodoo2 as well - RICH*]. I'm on the lookout for Virtua Cop 2, my arcade all-time favourite.

Your mag's great - any chance of a section outlining older games for newer owners ? A sort of Good, Bad and Ugly ?

Bren, via email

You aren't alone in being a "Johnny Come Lately" to the Saturn scene. We've had a lot of letters like yours and the following chap's outpourings sum up the situation pretty well... RICH

FOR £65 YOU CAN'T GO WRONG

Dear SSM,

When it came to getting a "next generation" machine I opted for a PlayStation. Now I think the PlayStation is great, but since I've been hooked on videogames since the late 70s I felt that it failed to deliver me anything as thoroughly addictive and playable as, say Space Invaders or Scramble...

Whilst shopping one day I went into a local video game story and there on the top shelf was a second-hand Saturn for £65. Now, as I was new to the Saturn I'd not played any of its games so I thought I'd get stuff like Virtua Cop, NiGHTS and Sega Rally to see what the hype was about. Boy - was this what the doctor ordered! Just these few games restored my faith in the next generation machines and supplied the playability and addictiveness that I so longed for. This was six months ago. Now I know that Saturn's lifespan is going to be cut short soon, but games like Panzer Saga, House of the Dead and World League Soccer are all utterly stunning and cannot be matched on any system. I would like to say a big thank you to Sega for getting me back into videogames and from now on I shall be loyal to them and will definitely get their new system when it comes out.

Andy Gurr, Sheffield



As your experiences bear out, it's all about gameplay. I think that we all agree that when it comes to certain styles of games and specific gameplay experiences, the Saturn just can't be matched and will be superseded only by the new Dreamcast, where those values live on. In the meantime, expect some suitable Saturn coverage in SSM to cater for these new readers. RICH

WHAT IS SEGA UK DOING!?

Dear S and M,

The challenge of answering this will probably require the immense powers of Master Leadbetter; "What is Sega doing?" I mean, since its last release, what has been justifying their paychecks? As far as I see it, there are three main possibilities.

A. They are all coming into work specifically to mope about and weep at the lack of cash flow, drifting around in limbo with resignation at their untimely and unfair downfall.

B. They are actually secretly and intensely busy with incredible covert projects like the simultaneous release in Europe of Grandia, King of Fighters '96, Thunderforce V, Metal Slug etc, etc... with stupendously risky advertising to boot for the final counter attack against the bastion of popularity formerly held by the complacent, fattening lords of Sony.

C. Sony World-Eater Corp have bought off all the staff of Sega Europe in order to ensure their continuing success.

I'd like to think it's B, but what can I say...? At least it ain't Nintendo! What do you people say? Tell us!

ISN, Kent



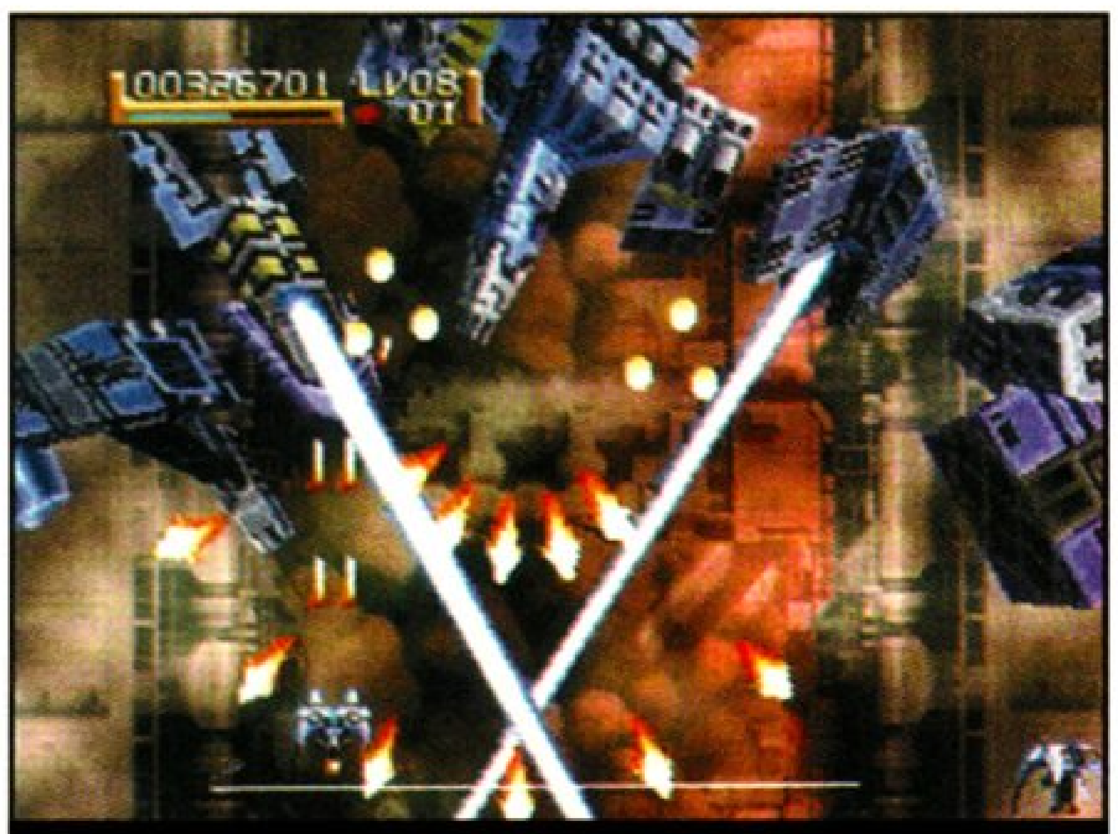
Dreamcast IS the future of videogames as we know them!

How about option D - planning for the release of the most powerful games machine the world has ever seen - inside or outside of an arcade! True, we should be seeing more support for the Sega Saturn which continues to attract some classic software (in Japan) as this issue demonstrates, but the fact of the matter is that Dreamcast is becoming the number one priority for Sega Europe. RICH

A STALKER-IN-WAITING WRITES...

Dear SSM

I just had to write to you about the new Sega console (formerly Katana) which is now being called Dreamcast. This console is supposedly 128-bit with the capabilities of 3 million polygons a second and believe me when I say "wow" - I really mean it! This machine is also capable of displaying revolutionary



Radiant Silvergun: there's lots of life in the Saturn yet!

new types of realistic and engrossing 3D graphics with human movement, fog, water effects, lighting and shading appearing ultra-realistic etc, etc... *[I think that we've heard enough now, ta - RICH]*

Now just hold it RIGHT there. Why write to us telling us about Dreamcast stuff that we already know and indeed have already told you? What are you going to do next, stalk me for a fortnight then write in telling me what I had for breakfast and what's in my dustbin? RICH

ME? IMPORT? NO!

Dear SSM

I would imagine that the majority of your readers are, like myself, still playing PAL Saturns. Personally I refuse to have the switches fitted to play import games. Yes I know the advantages, but here's a question for Sega: "After initially buying my Saturn for £279 two years ago, why the hell should I pay an extra £40 just to be able to pay through the nose again to buy games for around £60 from importers simply because you've let your loyal gamers down"?

Jason Huet, South Wales



Another Nutter sighting: write in please, Mrs Nutter!

It's a vicious circle. If there were more Saturn owners, Sega could release more games, but since there are few new games getting out there, there are no new owners. It's sad but true in that the only way to get the maximum potential out of your Saturn is to "go import". Sega could throw more money at Saturn, but it's stocking up around £66m for the launch of Dreamcast in Europe... RICH

A WORD FROM GARY'S MUM

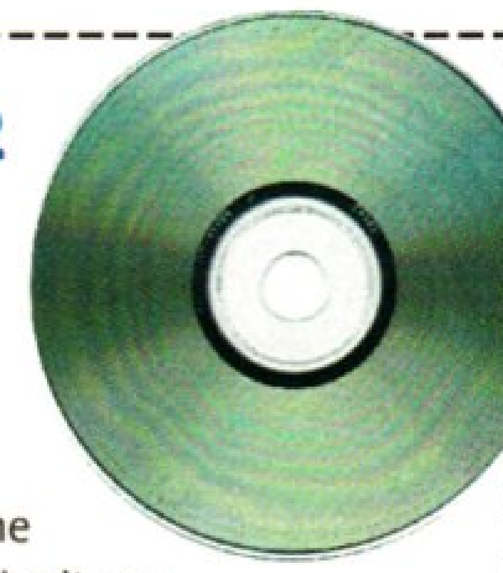
Dear SSM,

Perhaps you can help me trace a lost person. You see, my baby boy packed his bags and left for the big smoke early last year (neglecting to include his wellies which I thought very foolish) and since then has made no effort to contact home. He was last seen boarding a train at Bodmin Station just after Easter, but that was the last I heard of him. However, by pure chance I picked up a copy of your excellent magazine in an agricultural foodstuffs merchant and his name was alongside someone else's photograph on the front page. If you do know of the whereabouts of my lost son perhaps you could ask him to contact me within the next week, you can mention that I won the lottery last week which may get a response, if not I will write again at some length detailing life on the farm and giving some very interesting information concerning his early years.

Mary Cutlack, via email

I'm sure I speak for everyone who works for SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE and indeed reads it when I say, "yes please!" I request - nay demand - that other staff members' parents, guardians and/or truant officers write in with embarrassing details of their early years with a view for international publication. That being the case I'll be on the lookout for that all-important missive from Lee's old keeper at Whipsnade Zoo... RICH

GAME WINNER



SSM SUFFRAGETTES ASSEMBLE!

Dear SSM

I have to agree with Caroline Henson in issue #32. Why don't you have some boys in your "And Finally..." section? It doesn't have to be a whole page. Just give us girls a little section in your great mag. We do feel a bit left out y'know.

You could have some pictures of Ken from Street Fighter; a real babe, if I do say so myself (make sure you show his stomach and chest. Ooaaah!) How about Sie Kensou and Shingo Taboki from King of Fighters or Lion, the French babe from Virtua Fighter, they're all very sexy. Oh, I can't forget to mention Lead Phoenix from Burning Rangers. I would love to hose him down, any way! Please don't discard this letter. Print it and give all us girls what we want, what we really really want.

Jane Bennet, Scotland

PS. Nick from your mag looks like a real babe!

After a few letters like this, I have to admit to feeling just ever-so-slightly guilty now about "And Finally..." But conversely, I'm never going to get fired up in the same way that you ladies do about the likes Ryu, Ken, Lion... or even Nick Paterson! So here's the deal: in issue #36 we WILL feature a bloke, but I want our female readers to provide the text! All you have to do is write between 150 and 200 words on your favourite "hunk" in the "And Finally..." stylee. Send in your entries to AND FINALLY... at the usual address and the best entries will get a very special prize... dinner with Lee! Ho, ho, only kidding. RICH

The All-New Mad Jock McMad Award!

This is a new section in Virtua Writer, where the most sinister, "disturbed" missive of the month is highlighted for your reading pleasure. There is no prize for winning this "award", it serves merely as a warning to our normal readers...

Dear SSM,

Before I sat down to write this letter I had just put The Verve's new album, Urban Hymns in my CD-ROM. Now those familiar with the album would know that the first song is none other than that classic "Bitter Sweet Symphony." As Richard Ashcroft started to sing it soon dawned on me... this song could well have been Sega's flagship song for the past five years. *[Except it only came out last year you crazy fool - RICH]*

I'm serious. Just look at the lyrics to see what I mean. The start goes a little something like this:

"Cause it's a bitter sweet symphony... that's life. Try to make ends meet you're, a slave to money then you die. I'll take you down the only road I've ever been down. You know the one that takes you to the places where all the things meet yeah! No change, I can change, I can change, but I'm here in my mode, I am here in my mode but I'm a million different people from one day to the next I can change my mode, no, no, no, no, no, no, no."

Isn't it painfully obvious? Sega's existence has pretty much been a "Bitter Sweet Symphony", full of its ups and downs. From the success of the Megadrive to the misgivings of the Mega-CD, the 32X, the Game Gear and to some extent (I'm too proud to say "to a great extent") the Saturn. Some would even go so far as to suggest that Sega has been sucking the lemon quite a lot in the past few years.

I'll put the lyrics in lay-man's terms. The line "I'll take you down the only road I've ever been down," could well represent Sega's ongoing journey into failure and Sega's unwillingness to change its perception of what the consumer wants. This is followed by "You know the one that takes you to the places where all the things meet yeah!" which supports the above. The "things" being the machines, the "places" being financial loss, a sense of failure and a lack of respect from consumers.



Sega: a Bitter Sweet Symphony? Really?

Then there's "I'm a million different people from one day to the next," which represents the different arms of Sega (SoJ, SoA and SoE) who have had clashes of interest and failed to represent a unified company - thus this "million different people", with its own ideas and beliefs of what Sega is about and what the consumer wants... BUT PLEASE DON'T THINK I'M BAGGING SEGA AT ALL.

On the contrary, I am a devout Sega fan and pride myself on being so.

I want to focus on one part of the song which for many years has embodied something which Sega, up until now, has failed to do... [NOOO! *ENOUGH! - RICH*]

Renato Castello, Adelaide, Australia

I think either a) you have overanalysed this or b) you are quite mad. Either way I suggest adopting the Bee Gees track "Tragedy" as your personal anthem RICH

Q&A

It's about time this Q+A business went more than one way. What I want to know is do you still have to do 'Country Dancing' or 'Musical Movement' at school? And if so, why? What's the point? Do you really think I achieved my position of great power and influence with the aid of these 'skills'? In fact, just how much of a *negative* effect did these antics have on the destiny of one born for greatness? That's what I want to know any way. I daresay you'll be after info on the Dreamcast. Send mail to Dancin' Romancin' Q+A, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, London E14 9TZ. Or email ssm.qa@ecm.emap.com.

FAIRLY PREDICTABLE QUESTIONS

Dear SSM,

Please print my fairly predictable questions. I know the console has only just been revealed but please try to answer them.

1. I hear that the Dreamcast will be released in November in Japan and that it will be released in Europe towards the end of 1999. Why the delay bringing the console to Europe? By then we will be enjoying P2 800s with Power VR3 graphics cards making the console seem obsolete.
2. In your letters pages, the ú sign appears as a £. Why? Keyboards not mapped properly or does Lee consider the office keyboards as his territory?
3. Is Lee really a made up character designed to frighten small children?
4. Digitiser say that the Dreamcast will not be as powerful as the Model 3 but will be able to perfectly replicate Model 2b games. Is this true?
5. As the Dreamcast has a modem, will you be able to go on the Internet, download things, receive viruses etc? Will you be able to smash Americans over the 'net at VF3? Will there be dedicated Dreamcast servers?
6. Do you think that SF3 scenario 3 (or indeed scenario 2) will ever reach these shores?
7. Apparently SF vs X-Men will never be released in Europe (what I have read on the net) could you please confirm this.
8. Don't you think that the inclusion of an English mode on Vampire Savior is a little hint that it won't come out over here?

Adrian Walker, Maidenhead

PS I find your sense of humour great, especially when you take the mick out of 'The Nutter'. Keep up the good work!

1. Sega is a Japanese company - ergo it concentrates on its domestic market first. Sega readily recognises that Europe is a harder territory to capture, so extra time is required to get it right. As for advancing PC technology... well you won't get anything quite so powerful for £200, will you? 2. We're slowly moving over to PCs for our writing, so the odd gremlin will crop up. We'll deal with it. 3. I'm afraid it's true. All of it. 4. I've answered this in letters, but if you want to believe something published by people who've never seen Dreamcast, that's your lookout. 5. That's the general idea, I believe. We'll get a better idea closer to the Japanese launch. 6. I hope so. I really do. 7. Confirmed. Sega Europe just ain't got the cash to spare on Saturn. How depressing. 8. No, the Vampire team are just perfectionists.

AN ANGRY YOUNG MAN

Dear SSM

As I have been reading your mag for a while I thought I should write to you. So answer my questions! Please!.

1. I read Digitiser on teletext and they have said about the 'Dreamcast', so will it be 128-bit and be able to do arcade perfect Sega Rally 2 and Virtua Fighter?
2. You said WLS '98 was the best console football game ie. great playablity, graphic etc. but when I played your demo disc, to my surprise it was crap! What has happened to your reviews!?
3. Can you print the special moves on WWS '98 please as I don't know any.
4. I went to buy Enemy Zero, partly on the strength of your review, but it was £45! Where can I get it (second-hand or new) for under £20?
5. Can you have a compo where the prize is to look round your offices?
6. Why won't Sega get GTA on the Saturn and don't give me the crap about it being a Sony exclusive!
7. As a top gamesplayer I want to get into the games industry when I'm older, I'm 13 at the moment, how do I do that?
8. Can you have a bit in your magazine about how to get a job in the games industry?
9. Tell Sega to change the name of 'Dreamcast' to something like 'Katana'!
10. Why don't Blockbuster have any of the good Saturn games like Sega Rally or Virtua Fighter 2?

Paul Clark, via email

1. That's the idea. We'll see just how powerful it really is over the next few months. The demos you've seen to date are NOTHING compared to the true power! 2. Nothing. WLS is a great game and you are wrong. 3. I'll think about it. 4. I'm sorry, I haven't got a hotline to every games shop in the UK, mail order is probably your best bet. 5. It would only encourage stalkers... and I've had enough of them. 6. All right then I won't. 7. Personal initiative. 8. No, we're not desperate to fill pages. 9. No. 10. Presumably they weren't making enough cash when they were current.



Dreamcast: We'll see its full power in the coming months!

PANZER QUERIES

Dear SSM

After completing the excellent Panzer Dragoon Saga (wow) I have got a few questions about the game:

1. When you have defeated Sestren, you are supposed to meet Gash at the valley where you first met. How do you do this? I can't find him anywhere.
2. I found Azel at the excavation site, but she only says she wants to get inside? How do you do this?
3. Where is the last extra class berserk technique?
4. What does the song at the end mean?

Daniel Bell, Wimborne, Dorset.

1. Odd that, isn't it? Despite saving the game after Sestren, you seem to get sent back to the tower before you face the final boss, effectively holding up the story! 2. Azel's at ALL the camp sites for the reason explained in the previous question. 3. I got it by petting the dragon 28 times! 4. It's in Japanese, a language I am not fully familiar with.

GETTING STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

Dear SSM

1. Which is better: Virtua Fighter 3 or Tekken 3? And why?
2. Everybody has been saying how brilliant the DeathTank multiplayer mode for Duke Nukem 3D is and I've been trying to find something about it, but I can't so can you please tell me something about it.
3. What will happen if you don't use the 4MB cart for X-Men vs Street Fighter?

Mohammad Itani, via email

1. VF3 obviously! It's light years ahead. 2. Check out issue #25 for all of the info you desire. 3. The game tells you to put the 4MB cart in!

FAQ

These'll be the questions that appear most frequently in our little Q+A mail receptacle. Come here first for no-shit answers on the burning questions of the moment!

1. What's Sega's commitment to Saturn now that the Dreamcast has been announced?

Good question. Sega will be watching sales of Saturn games like Shining Force III, Burning Rangers over the summer very carefully. If they do well, we should see more games coming across. Until then, Deep Fear remains the only official title to look forwards to come September time.

2. When is Resident Evil 2 coming out?

It's still undecided when the game will come out in Japan, but despite the Dreamcast announcement, it's still very much on Capcom's release schedule for Japan this year.

3. Can I play Saturn titles on the Dreamcast?

Nope - the architecture is all-new, meaning no compatibility whatsoever. Presumably you own a Saturn any way, so what's the hassle?

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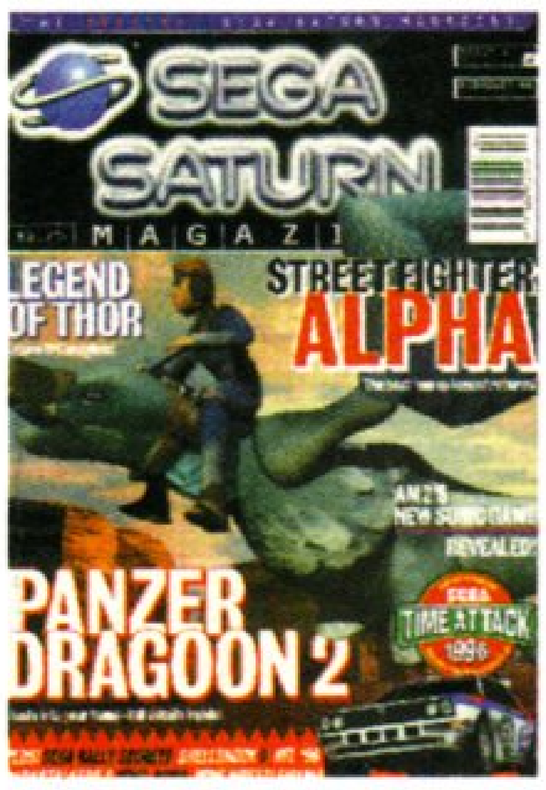
ISSUE #1 NOV 95
Epoch-making First Issue of SSM with awesome video! Reviews: Clockwork Knight 2, Sim City 2000, Theme Park, Street Fighter the Movie, NBA Jam TE, Robotica, NHL Hockey, Rayman, World Series Baseball. Showcases: Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally, Virtua Cop!



ISSUE #2 DEC 95
Reviewed: Virtua Fighter 2, Virtua Cop, Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2, Hi-Octane, Victory Boxing, Golden Axe: The Duel, Mansion of Hidden Souls, Hebereke's Popoito, CyberSpeedway. Showcased: Virtua Fighter 2, Firestorm, X-Men: Children of the Atom.



ISSUE #3 JAN 96
Reviewed: Sega Rally, F1 Live Information, Galactic Attack, Mystaria, Worms, Virtua Racing, Off-World Interceptor. Showcases: Guardian Heroes, Mystaria, FIFA '96... plus all the secrets of Virtua Cop! Plus ultimate Sega Rally coverage... the BEST racing game!



ISSUE #4 FEB 96
Reviewed: Wing Arms, FIFA '96, Virtual Golf, Johnny Bazookatone, Toshinden, Cyberia, Casper, D, True Pinball, World Cup Golf. Showcases: Vampire Hunter/Street Fighter Alpha, D and all the secret cheats of Sega Rally! Plus Panzer Zwei AND part one of the VF2 Masterclass!



ISSUE #5 MAR 96
Reviewed: X-Men: Children of the Atom, Darius, Baku Baku Animal, NFL Quarterback Club, Hang On '96, Titan Wars. Showcases: Euro '96, Legend of Thor, Street Fighter Alpha, X-Men, Guardian Heroes, Panzer Zwei! Plus: VF2 masterclass and Sega Rally guide!



ISSUE #6 APR 96
Reviewed: WipEout, Magic Carpet, Street Fighter Alpha, Shellshock, Valora Valley Golf, Shining Wisdom, Gex. Showcases: Magic Carpet, Gun Griffon, MK3, Panzer Zwei, DarkStalkers/Vampire Hunter. Plus: VF2 Masterclass part three AND a cool WipEout guide.



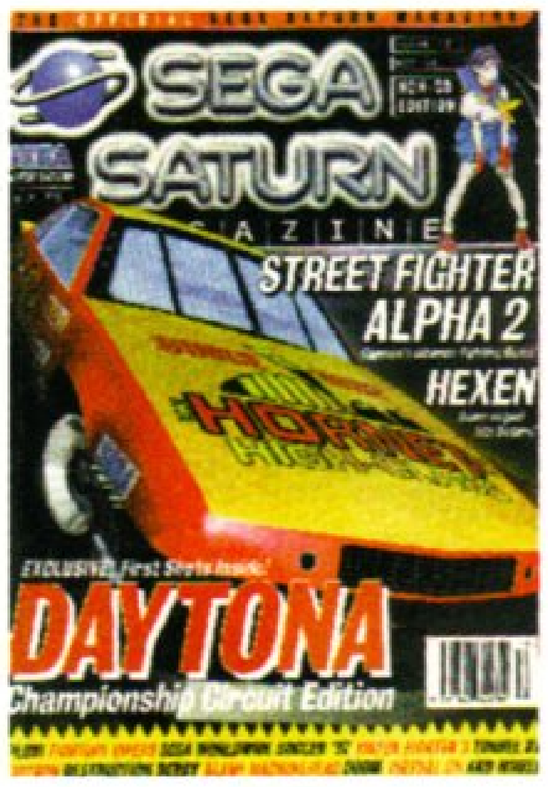
ISSUE #9 JUL 96
Full E3 report with first Cop 2 coverage! Reviewed: Loaded, Need for Speed, Shockwave Assault, Big Hurt Baseball, Blackfire, WWF, Striker, Virtual Open Tennis, Ghen War. Showcases: Sonic X-Treme (now canned!), VF Kids, Exhumed, Space Hulk and of course NiGHTS!



ISSUE #10 AUG 96
NiGHTS: Sonic Team's amazing game finally arrives! Reviewed: NiGHTS, Road Rash, Primal Rage, Slam and Jam, Starfighter 3000, Olympic Football, Sea Bass Fishing, Pro Pinball. Showcases: Athlete Kings, VF Kids, Alien Trilogy. Also: Guardian Heroes Tips!



ISSUE #11 SEP 96
Amazing Candy Fighting Vipers Cover! Reviewed: VF Kids, Alien Trilogy, Athlete Kings, Exhumed, NBA Action, Space Hulk, Keio Flying Squadron, Bust-A-Move, Story of Thor, PowerPlay Hockey. Showcases: Sega Ages, Cop 2, Soviet Strike. Plus: Shining Wisdom tips



ISSUE #12 OCT 96
Daytona CCE revealed! Reviewed: WorldWide Soccer '97, Fighting Vipers, Actua Golf, Destruction Derby, Blam! Machinehead, Bubble Bobble Pack, Highway 2000. Also included: Awesome NiGHTS guide that will blow you away. And! The dread arrival of The Master!



ISSUE #13 NOV 96
Amazing Street Fighter Alpha 2 coverage! Reviewed: Street Fighter Alpha 2, World Series Baseball 2, Tomb Raider, Earthworm Jim 2, Impact Racing. Showcases: Vipers part 2 plus programmer interview, Tomb Raider. Plus: tips to get you all the way through Exhumed!



ISSUE #14 DEC 96
World's First Virtua Cop 2 Review! Also reviewed: Daytona CCE, Amok, Street Racer, Hardcore 4x4, Chaos Control, Three Dirty Dwarves, Blazing Dragons, Crimewave, PGA Golf '97. Showcases: Cop 2, Christmas NiGHTS, Daytona CCE. Lobotomy Software interviewed!



ISSUE #17 MAR 97
Manx TT Exclusively Revealed! Reviewed: Die Hard Arcade, Crusader, Hexen, Die Hard Trilogy, Grid Run, Andretti Racing, Tilt, Soviet Strike. Showcases: Hexen, Soviet Strike, Fighters MegaMix, Die Hard Arcade. Tips: Tomb Raider part two. Exhumed Team Dolls!



ISSUE #18 APR 97
Duke Nukem 3D - First report and interview! Reviewed: Manx TT SuperBike, Area 51, Incredible Hulk, Norse by Norsewest, Iron Man/XO Manowar, Mass Destruction, Spot Goes To Hollywood! Tips: Die Hard Trilogy part one, Dark Savior, Tomb Raider conclusion!



ISSUE #19 MAY 97
HUGELY IMPRESSIVE CD! Plus: Quake interview! Reviewed: Bomberman, Crypt Killer, FIFA 97, NBA Live 97, Dragonheart, Swagman, Puzzle Fighter, Space Jam, Return Fire, Black Dawn, Torico. Tips: Fighters MegaMix part one, Die Hard Trilogy part two and Soviet Strike!



ISSUE #20 JUN 97
Last Bronx Revealed! More Quake! Reviewed: Fighters MegaMix, King of Fighters 95, Pandemonium, Mr Bones, Mechwarrior 2, Scorcher, Shining the Holy Ark. Showcases: Pandemonium, Mechwarrior 2, Shining Holy Ark! Tips: MegaMix, Die Hard part three, Hexen part one.



ISSUE #21 JUL 97
WipEout 2097! Resident Evil/ Marvel Super Heroes exclusive! Reviewed: Jonah Lomu Rugby, Battlestations, ID4, Actua Soccer Club Edition, The Crow. Double AM3 interviews: arcade Top Skater, Last Bronx! Tips: Shining Holy Ark part one, MegaMix part three, Hexen part two!



ISSUE #22 AUG 97
Sonic R revealed! Special E3 Report! Reviewed: Sonic Jam, Dark Light, Dragon Force, WipEout 2097. Previews: Quake, Marvel Super Heroes! Showcased: Dragon Force, Last Bronx, WipEout 2097, Huge Resident Evil guide! Tips: Hexen Final Part, Shining the Holy Ark 2.



ISSUE #25 NOV 97
Sonic R Mega Report! Reviews: Worldwide Soccer '98, John Madden '98, Street Fighter Collection and Bust-A-Move 3. Showcases: Quake, Touring Car plus mega Lobotomy Interview and DeathTank revealed for the first time! Tips: Resident Evil part two, Last Bronx part two and Marvel Super *Villains*!



ISSUE #26 DEC 97
MEGA CHRISTMAS NiGHTS CD WITH THIS ISSUE! Plus: Dead or Alive! Reviewed: Sonic R, Formula Karts, Sega Touring Car, Enemy Zero, Croc, Trash It, Mortal Kombat Trilogy, The Lost World, Quake! Huge guides on Duke Nukem 3D (part 1) and Marvel Super Heroes (part 1). An issue you MUST NOT MIS



ISSUE #27 JAN 98
AWESOME SEGA FLASH #6 WITH THIS ISSUE! Plus: House of the Dead and X-Men vs Street Fighter revealed! Previews: Rampage World Tour, Layer Section, Zero Divide! Reviewed: Steep Slope Sliders, Maximum Force, NASCAR 98! Tipped: Sonic R, Marvel Super Heroes part two, Duke part two.



ISSUE #28 FEB 98
Winter Heat showcase, 1997 retrospective and the 50 best Saturn games... ever! Massive Panzer Saga coverage begins too! Previews: Shining Force 3, Bubble Symphony, Vandal Hearts. Reviewed: FIFA '98, NBA Live '98, EA NHL '98, Rampage World Tour, Tipped: Quake part two, Duke part three, Touring Car.



ISSUE #29 MAR 98
EXCLUSIVE new machine news and Sega Rally 2 coverage! Showcases on House of the Dead, Burning Rangers, Bomberman Fight! Panzer Saga and Grandia. Previews: DJ Wars, Zap '98, Shining Force 3, Real Bout Fatal Fury Special. Reviewed: Winter Heat, Sega NHL '98. Tipped: MK Trilogy moves list, Quake part three, Croc part one.

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ISSUE #7 MAY 96
FREE! REVIEW AND TIPS BOOK! And! NiGHTS revealed! Reviews: Euro '96, Panzer Zwei, Defcon 5, The Horde, Nightwarriors/Vampire Hunter, Revolution X, Alone in the Dark 2. VF2 masterclass: the penultimate edition. WipEout guide part two, plus all the X-Men moves too!



ISSUE #8 JUN 96
Heart of Darkness featured... and it's still not out! Reviewed:Guardian Heroes, Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3, In the Hunt, Discworld, 3D Lemmings. Showcases: Panzer Zwei final, NiGHTS, Guardian Heroes final update. Full detailage on top games still worth buying today!



ISSUE #15 JAN 97
COVER CD WITH VIRTUAL ON, DAYTONA CCE, WORLDWIDE SOCCER, TOMB RAIDER! Reviewed: Virtual On, Blast Chamber, NHL Hockey '97, Command and Conquer, Sega Ages, Mighty Hits, Tetris Plus, Breakpoint, Krazy Ivan, Tunnel B1, Madden '97, Jewels of the Oracle.



ISSUE #16 FEB 97
Amazing Fighters MegaMix Coverage! 16 pages of small tips - it's all in here! Reviewed: Sonic 3D Blast, NFL Quarterback Club '97, NBA Jam Extreme, Toshinden URA, Tempest 2000, Batman Forever, Bug Too!, Dark Savior. Showcases: Bug Too! Tomb Raider guide part one!



ISSUE #23 SEPT 97
Marvel Super Heroes exclusive! Reviewed: Resident Evil, Warcraft II, Williams' Greatest Hits, Discworld 2. Previews: Touring Car, Grandia, Croc, Salamander Deluxe Pack! Showcased: MSH, Resident Evil, ThunderForce V, Last Bronx. House of the Dead Interview. Final Shining guide!



ISSUE #24 OCT 97
Panzer Saga exposed! Reviews: Duke Nukem 3D, Last Bronx, Marvel Super Heroes, Frankenstein. Previews: SWWS '98, Quake, Formula Karts. Showcased: Croc, Duke Nukem 3D, Marvel Super Heroes. Coming Soon: Sonic R, Silhouette Mirage. Guides: Last Bronx, Resident Evil and Wipeout!



ISSUE #30 APR 98
World League Soccer revealed! Huge House of the Dead and Burning Rangers showcases, special import game review section. Previews: Z, Atari Greatest Hits, Power Drift, Gun Griffon 2. Reviewed: X-Men vs Street Fighter, Panzer Dragoon Saga, Chill. Tippage: Grandia walkthrough part one, Croc part two, Quake part four.



ISSUE #31 MAY 98
ACE COVER CD: DISC ONE OF PANZER SAGA! Showcases: Radiant Silvergun, Z, World league Soccer, Bomberman Wars. Previews: Dragon Force 2, Shining Force 3 (part two), Three Wonders. Reviewed: Burning Rangers, House of the Dead, Z, Whizz, Atari Classics. Guides: Panzer part one, Grandia 2, Croc 3.

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FV2
FIGHTING VIPERS 2





With Fighting Vipers 2 now hitting UK arcades, SSM speaks EXCLUSIVELY to AM2 Director, Mr Hiroshi Kataoka, about his team's latest arcade classic. WARREN HARROD does the chatting...

AM2 Director, Mr Hiroshi Kataoka, is the man behind Sega's latest incredible Model 3 beat 'em up and an all-round top bloke!

SSM When did you start work on Fighting Vipers 2?
Hiroshi Kataoka We started at the beginning of 1997, just after we finished making Fighters MegaMix on Saturn.

SSM Why did you decide to make this sequel?
HK Fighting Vipers was a new challenge for us at that time. It was the first time that we had tried to use walls and armour in a fighting game, so there were quite a lot of ideas left over that we didn't use. One year after its completion, we thought we were ready to make a better version.

SSM For a fighting game, FV2 has a very interesting story and exciting characters. Was it always your intention to create a game with such a dramatic feeling to it?
HK Yes it was. Sega already has Virtua Fighter which many consider is the highest standard in the orthodox fighting genre, combining as it does such realistic fighting arts as Kenpo and pro-wrestling. That's one type of game. We wanted to make a different type of fighting game that was very energetic and exciting. That's how the FV style came about.



SSM Compared to other games, the themes in FV2 are far more fascinating. What influence did they have on the game's design?
HK This time, the Vipers are being hunted down by BM, who's the final boss, and taken to his prison island. This didn't affect the character designs, but it did have a major influence on the background scenery. Because of this, we were able to create a lot of interesting stages.

SSM In order to create such realistic stages did you visit any real life places?
HK When the project started, a few members of the team went to San Fransisco to visit Alcatraz, the famous prison island. We could actually go inside some of the old prison buildings and take a lot of photographs.

SSM How long did the design process take?
HK. It didn't take too long to do the stages, but we had to work very hard on the characters. We kept redoing the character designs right up to the



▲ Only the Model 3 Step 2 board had the programming power AM2 needed.



▲ The stunning backgrounds in FV2 are almost the real stars of the show.

end, so we must have spent about ten months in total.

SSM Some of the stages are very large and detailed. Were you confident that you'd be able to do them when development started?

HK When we first started FV2, we were actually using Model 3 Step 1 technology, so we didn't think that we'd be able to do the city stage. However, during development the Model 3 Step 2 became available and with its increased performance we were able to create the game's large and complex stages.

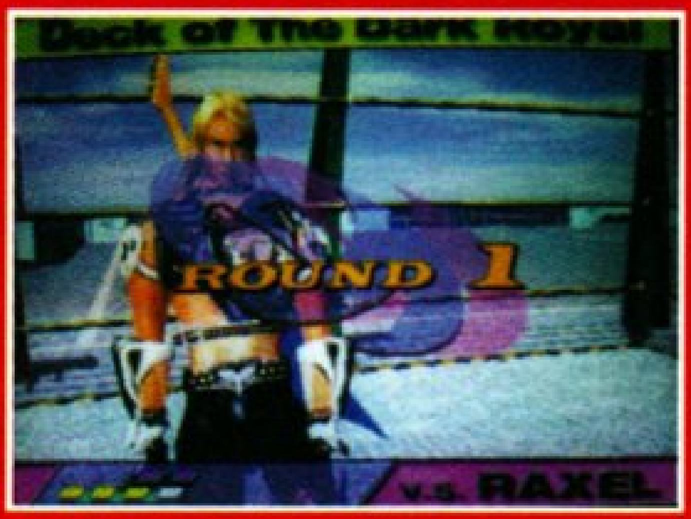
SSM There seems to be a vast improvement in the variety of backgrounds in Fighting Vipers 2...

HK The Model 3 board is a really great piece of hardware, so there are a lot of things that we can now do that we haven't been able to accomplish before. We wanted to make as much use of the Model 3 technology as possible.

SSM The stages aren't just standard backdrops though. The characters can interact with the scenery as well can't they?

HK That's right. For example, if you send your opponent flying out of the ring on the Great Museum stage then you can make them smash into the T-Rex and the entire skeleton will collapse into small pieces! It took us a lot of hard work to create that feature, but after we were able to make use of the Step 2 we had enough power to handle the extra







▲ Character designs were undertaken by renowned artist, Mr Imaitoons.





▲ Just some of the awesome interactive 3D stages on offer.

polygons needed. The T-Rex alone is constructed from 4,000 polygons. It's a great feeling to see something large fall down, so we tried to include several objects. Besides the T-Rex there's also a steam train, a biplane and a satellite station.

SSM Before development started, were there any stages you definitely wanted to include in the game?

HK We really wanted to have one stage where you were flying in the air, so that you could look down across an entire cityscape. We didn't actually get to ride in a helicopter, but we had someone who had studied building architecture and he was of great use to us. Because of his input, we were able to create some really interesting buildings. In addition, in order to give the story more feeling, we wanted somewhere like the inside of a prison as well.

SSM Were there any stages you designed but couldn't include in the final game because they were too ambitious?

HK We had a lot of ideas, but rather than that our main concern was >>





The game's innovative multiple route system is considered by AM2 to be the game's highpoint.



>> that if we created one stage that was too large and amazing then there would be too great a difference between that kind of stage and the simpler stages.



SSM Did you use motion capture for the characters' actions?
HK We didn't use it for the characters' fighting movements, but we did use it for all of the characters' opening sequences and winning and losing poses. Motion capture isn't really suitable for FV2 because the characters' actions are completely over the top. A normal human wouldn't be able to do these kind of actions. You couldn't motion capture any of Charlie's BMX moves. That's why the character designs took so long. We had to do everything ourselves by hand.

SSM What influenced you in the design of the characters?
HK The fashionable sports that are being played by young people today, such as BMX riding and skateboarding along with their associated music culture, were a major influence in designing the game's characters.

SSM Could you explain a little about the character design process?
HK Well, first of all we chose a character's image and then we decided which moves were most appropriate. In the case of Charlie, after we decided to give him a bike, we watched a lot of BMX videos and worked out what kind of actions we could give him.

Mr Imaitoons had plenty of input into the game's character designs. In fact he came up with the idea for Emi's Teddy Mech!

SSM Where did you get the ideas for the characters' amazing costumes?
HK This time the FV2 illustrator, Mr Imaitoons did all the character designs as well. He was very active in creating lots of ideas for the costumes right from the very beginning. Emi's Teddy Mech was his idea as well. The first time we saw it we were all taken back, but that's exactly why we thought it was a great idea. We wanted to really surprise players.





SSM Tell us a little about the new characters in Fighting Vipers 2.
HK The one character we wanted in the game right from the start was someone with a bike. This became Charlie, the BMX character. There's never been a character with a bike in a fighting game before, so it was a completely new challenge for us. We had a lot of trouble with him. After we created him there were a lot of male characters, so we decided to make another female character to balance things out. I talked about the design of her with Mr. Imaitoons and he came up with the idea for Emi. Honey is a very mature character, so this time we wanted a have a cute girl instead.



SSM How did the design of the new characters (Emi and Charlie) evolve throughout the development of the game?
HK Emi didn't really change much from her first design sketches. However, Charlie has fairly complex armour and his costume design and colour schemes changed quite a lot.



Fighting Vipers 2 should be out in UK arcades as you read this. So what are you waiting for? Go play it!



▲ All of the characters from the original game return for the sequel.



▲ Mr Kataoka spots Lee Nutter's picture on page three of SSM. Aaaggh!





SSM In order to make the new characters appear even more exciting than the old Fighting Vipers, what did you have to do? What was the primary aim here?
HK For those players already used to the old Vipers, we wanted to create new characters that make even these people surprised when they saw them. Emi with a giant mechanical teddy on her back and Charlie who rides on a BMX bike are the kind of characters that you're not likely to forget in a hurry!

SSM During the character balance testing phase, did you alter any of the Vipers' strengths or weaknesses?
HK Actually, we wanted to make all the Vipers stronger! [laughs] However, in particular, it was often said that Tokio was a little weak in Fighting Vipers so we've made him a little stronger, relatively, than he was. Overall, the balance is pretty much the same as it was before. However, in order to maintain the Vipers' balance after adding the two all-new characters, it took us a total of three months of testing to get it just right.

SSM When did you decide to introduce the multiple route system into FV2? What was the thinking behind introducing such a system when AM2 haven't done it in an arcade game before?
HK We wanted to include it from the start. It's always the case that poor players only get to fight the same characters, so we wanted to give even these people a chance to be able to select which stages and vipers they wanted to fight against.













AM2 knew that they wanted to include a BMX bike riding character even before the game was programmed. The result was Charlie.







Multiple replays show off the incredible detail and texture maps AM2 have managed to squeeze into Fighting Vipers 2.

SSM During development, did you consider other types of route systems as well?
HK Actually, we wanted to have many more routes with various stages, but there's only so much you can do in a year and considering the flow of the story in FV2, we feel we achieved the best balance possible in the time available.

SSM How do the different routes alter the difficulty of the game?
HK All of the game's characters get stronger as you progress through the game, but if you look at the monitor, the characters on the upper route (such as Honey) are stronger than those on the lower route. It's definitely worth playing as other characters.

SSM Do the routes have any other influence?
HK If you choose the upper route then you have the chance of meeting a hidden character. However, in order to face this character you must have beaten all the strongest Vipers first. In this way the story changes depending on your route.

SSM What was the most difficult area of creating this route system?
HK At the junction point, in order to prevent players from always going down the same route, we had to be careful. If they always end up going the same way then it becomes boring, so we had to make the system of selecting a route simple enough so that everyone would be able to easily choose a path with a 50/50 chance of success.

SSM Besides the route system, did you create anything else to keep players interested in the game once they've completed it?
HK Yes, we developed the Ranking system. Even if you win against the same character you will get a different Ranking depending on how you played against him/her. If you repeatedly use the same simple attack then you'll get a low ranking, but if you use a lot of cool attacks such as the Super KO then you'll get a much better ranking. The ranking goes from F to A... then Super A!

SSM Now that development has finished, what are your final impressions of Fighting Vipers 2?
HK All the things we wanted to do, but weren't able to include in Fighting Vipers, we finally managed to include in FV2, so we're really satisfied with the final result. Personally, the other thing I'm most proud of is that even a beginner can pick up the controls easily and send their opponents flying out of the ring with spectacular attacks. Even game maniacs will love all the new fighting moves we've added. It's a game that everyone can enjoy.

SSM What did the staff do to relax after they finished all the work on the game?
HK Most of the staff went on vacation. Others were finally able to go home and see their families again! [laughs] We didn't get to leave Sega much during the final months of development. We were sleeping on the floor in the office! [laughs]







▲ We can't wait to play a Dreamcast version of Fighting Vipers 2!





The House of the Dead!



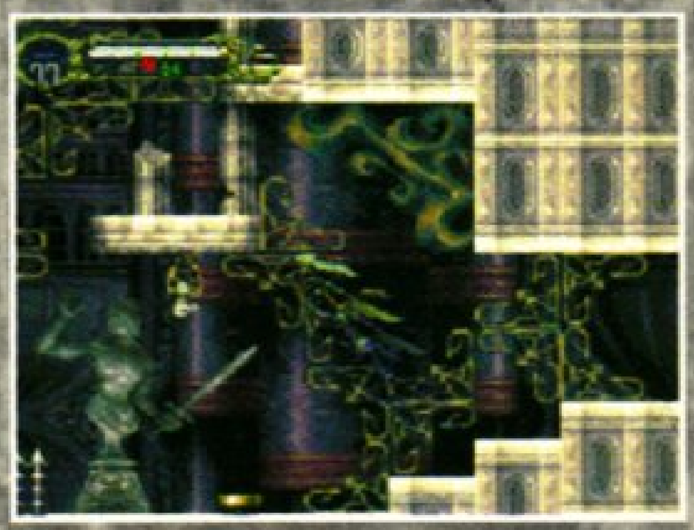
Konami's classic 2D platform series is back with a bite! Castlevania X has been ported over from the PlayStation, received a host of new features and is in your local import shop right now. MATT YEO reports.

Above: Ah, the lovely Maria. This month's cover star and playable character in Konami's awesome Dracula X.

When we first approached Konami Japan with a view to covering the forthcoming release of Castlevania X on Saturn, the response wasn't quite what we expected. Not only was Konami surprised at the number of calls, queries and general reader interest we'd had regarding a UK launch for the game, but this talented developer also impressed on us the frustration they'd had over the past few months. It seems that with the announcement of the Dreamcast, Sega had cautioned third party developers to stagger their Saturn releases. For Konami this meant that although Castlevania X was completed and ready for a Japanese launch as early as April, the game would not appear until June 25th.

With Japanese gamers frothing at the mouth for the chance to tackle yet another quality Konami 2D platformer, the wait has been intolerable. Worse still is the fact that Konami Europe's total lack of Saturn support means that UK Sega fans will never get to play this masterpiece, unless they're the lucky owners of converted machines that is. For you guys, Konami has conjured up a real treat...





BLOODY HELL!

Set immediately after the events seen in the 1995 SNES hit Castlevania: Dracula X, this latest title builds on the ideas, characters and gameplay of its predecessors and delivers a near perfect package. For those of you unfamiliar with the previous games in the series (where the hell have you been hiding for the last ten years?!), this Saturn conversion of last year's PlayStation smash is essentially a tough-as-nails 2D platformer, chock-full of secrets to discover, fearsome monsters to defeat and magical spells to master. >>





▲ Maria's triple jump is essential for later levels.





▲ Alucard learns new magic throughout the game.





▲ The sheer range of monsters packed into the game is staggering.



CASTLEVANIA X: CHARACTER PROFILES



ALUCARD
The half vampire son of Count Dracula and a female human. He's a handsome bloke, is exceptionally strong and wields powerful dark magic. Doesn't talk a lot and has a cool character. Prefers to fight using swords, but also employs various magical items and has the ability to change his form into that of a bat, wolf or red mist.



RICHTER BELMONT
A descendent of the legendary vampire hunter family that has been fighting Dracula for generations. Defeated Dracula five years ago, but then completely disappeared. He has a strong sense of justice, hates dishonesty and is extremely hot-blooded. Richter is also capable of powerful double jumps and uses a metal chain whip in combating evil.



MARIA LARNEDO
A distant relation of the Belmont's and Richter's sister-in-law. Five years ago she became a vampire hunter and helped Richter defeat Dracula. Whilst searching for the missing Richter, she arrived at Dracula's evil castle. Brave and resourceful, Maria uses the power of animal spirits. Her triple jump proves handy for reaching previously inaccessible locations.



COUNT DRACULA
Legend states that every 100 years, he rises from the dead. The master of the evil castlevania (his fortress and the setting for all the games in the series), possesses powerful dark magics and aims to spread his terrifying darkness across the globe. Dracula is the father of Alucard and five years ago he was destroyed by Richter. Now he's back and battier than ever!

>> However, unlike previous games, Castlevania X actually introduces a number of RPG elements, requiring players to build up their character's experience points, armour and weapon skill as well as master new magical abilities and physical transformations.

BAT TO THE FUTURE
While both characters possess fantastic powers and abilities, the only way to truly appreciate Castlevania X (and undertake a real warrior's challenge) is to play through as Dracula's wayward son, Alucard. At the beginning of the game, Alucard has many dark powers and lethal edged weapons at his disposal, but an encounter with the grinning form of Death itself, sees him stripped of these attributes. It's then up to players to explore the castle's 1000+ rooms and levels, locate new magical abilities and find even more impressive weapons.

Unfortunately, this means that for the first few hours, Castlevania X proves itself to be an extremely tough platformer, with minor enemies sapping Alucard's strength and even the most basic tasks requiring players to go back and forth between monster-packed rooms. With perseverance, skill and a little luck, players should soon learn from their mistakes and more of the castle gradually begins to open up.

CLASH OF THE TITANS
While minor enemies initially prove themselves to be annoying irritations, players are required to prove their newfound skills at







▲ Continuing from the SNES game Dracula X...



▲ ...Players face the evil Count as Richter.



▲ Gone are the transparencies from the PlayStation game, but who cares?

CREEPY CHARACTERS

As a special treat for Saturn owners, Konami has ensured that the Sega version of its 32-bit extravaganza has extras that are unavailable in the PlayStation game of the same name. There's a roster of three characters to choose from the outset, whereas Sony's version only allows players to tackle the game as Alucard. Richter is the current champion of the vampire hunting Belmont's and as such has the responsibility of returning Dracula to his grave. Playing as Richter is definitely a good idea for novice gamers as his super jump and chain whip are two superb skills with which to explore the Count's gloomy castle. Maria, on the other hand, should really be selected by intermediate players, as her handy triple jump takes some mastering if you hope to reach inaccessible areas, and her weak magical blasts usually only destroy enemies after a few hits.







▲ Exploration is the key to gaining new powers and weapons.

▲ The Scylla lurks in The Groundwater Vein level of the castle, but is actually really easy to defeat... if you're careful that is.

key points in the game by tackling some of the finest 2D creations ever given form in a videogame. These bosses are truly the spawn of the devil and range from the the giant snake-like Scylla Wyrm and seductive Succubus to the dog-headed Cerebus and (eventually) Dracula himself.

By defeating boss creatures, players are given access to amazing new powers and spells, making it a far easier task to take on future foes and enter rooms previously out of reach. Accessing spells is actually something of a trial-and-error process, as they usually require tricky joypad commands. In fact some of these magical attacks are similar to Street Fighter style special moves, with both awkward D-pad and button combinations required in order to activate them. Once learned, these special magical attacks appear on Alucard's Inventory screen.

RPG OR PLATFORMER?

Speaking of which, I've already mentioned that Castlevania X features some new RPG elements, and this is where they come into play. Pressing Start brings up the main Inventory screen, a feature that is specific to Alucard alone and one that enables him to access a number of essential extras. From here, players are able to keep a close eye on Alucard's vital statistics such as armour levels, strength and hit point status. These increase or decrease depending on how well you play and likewise some artifacts may have either a negative or positive affect on Alucard.

The second option shows just what items have been gained on your travels, from gold coins and hearts to weapons and special objects. Correct use of these items is what will ultimately get players through the game in one piece. Equipping new armour and weapons will always make a difference in combat >>



▲ Using secondary weapons saves characters from losing loads of energy.



▲ Maria is an excellent first choice character, but she does make playing the game slightly too easy.

BOSS NO. 1

Dracula morphs into a demon, a young Maria appears and Richter shows off his new magical powers. Pretty cool, eh?



THE MAP

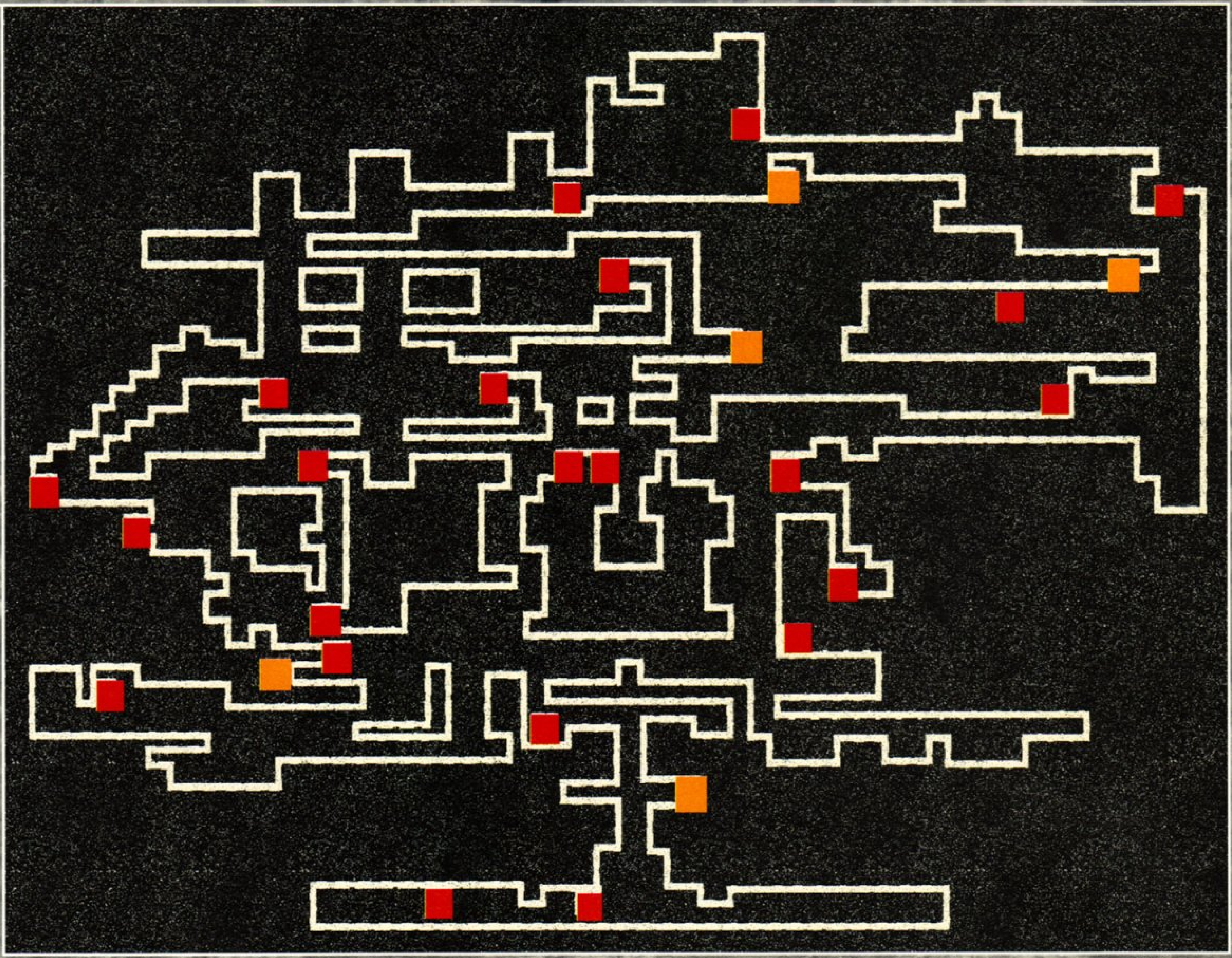
This map shows all of the game's main levels, but we'll leave it up to you to find the Cursed Prison and Underground Garden! However, there are certain key rooms you should be on the look-out for...

Save Points: Replenish energy and save games.



Warp Gates: Step inside and transport to other gates.





>> and magical objects such as potions and jewels are required to defeat certain enemies or accomplish specific tasks. Further items may be bought from the Librarian at a later date, that's if you make it that far of course...

The Inventory screen also shows how much of the game has been completed so far (displayed as a percentage) and a quick tap of the Left shoulder button brings up the invaluable castle map. Keep a close eye on this screen as alternative level routes and hidden doors are often shown, even if they're only accessible at a later date.

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

One of the most impressive features of Castlevania X surely has to be the game's sheer size. Over 1000 rooms have been tucked away in Dracula's mammoth fortress, all of which have to be reached in order to fully complete the game and access the hidden inverted castle stage...

Konami ensured that the PlayStation version of Castlevania X would take hardened platform gamers many hours to complete, even with plenty of practice. The Saturn version will take even longer to finish as the game contains a further two EXCLUSIVE hidden stages. Locating them isn't really a problem, but completing both the Underground Garden and Cursed Prison is a challenge worthy or true hardcore gamers only! Both these stages feature a host of new monsters created especially for the Saturn game, as well as a few new magical items such as The Boots of Swiftness (for increased speed, obviously) and the Holder (enables Alucard to carry and combine even more items).

MUSICAL MASTERPIECES

By now you should be getting the idea that Castlevania X is a true 2D platform classic and indeed it is. Okay, so the game's visuals may not be up to the 3D standards of today's next genera-







Some rooms are inaccessible at first..



...but monsters often show you the way.





Playing as Alucard is the game's real challenge. Are you up to it?



The Granfaloon is a huge pulsating brain of a boss, complete with drones!





tion machines, but that's all part of the series' timeless appeal. There are a few 3D spot effects, but on the whole they generally detract from the awesome, detailed sprite-based action.

A brief mention also has to go to the game's stunning musical soundtrack. Featuring some of the most beautiful and haunting tracks we've ever heard in a videogame, Castlevania's numerous background tunes sound as if they've been composed and performed by the greatest orchestra in the world. The truth is that Michileu Yamane's musical compositions stream directly from the game CD and are as impressive as any modern classical recording or original motion picture soundtrack. In another Saturn exclusive, Konami has rerecorded three classic Castlevania tunes from past games. Listen out for Castlevania "Vampire Killer", Castlevania II "Bloody Tears" and Legend of Castlevania "Beginning".

In fact, we're so impressed with the music on offer that we'd go so far as to say it's even worth picking up a copy of the Castlevania X import soundtrack CD and art book featuring the gorgeous illustrations of Ayami Kojima (as seen on these very pages).

DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT!

By the time you read this, Castlevania X: Symphony of the Night will be available on import and no doubt selling out by the trolley load. The reason why so many Saturn owners are going to fork out silly money for this 2D title? Quality gameplay. The phrase "they don't make 'em like they used to" certainly applies to Castlevania X as Konami has successfully captured that old skool feeling of 16-bit games from yesteryear. Don't get us wrong, this is no retro game rehash or trip down memory lane. On the contrary, Castlevania X is the perfect example of what videogames should be, just the right combination of stunning visuals, awesome aural effects and spot-on gameplay. Complete the game and you tackle the nightmare challenge of the Inverted Castle. Complete that herculean task and there are still two additional characters to play with. What more could you ask for? We here at SSM definitely advise you to get your Saturn converted and pick up an import copy of Castlevania X. You won't be disappointed!



The bizarre Scylla boss takes some beating, but it's worth the effort.



This hidden treasure room becomes accessible once Alucard can fly, or if you play as Richter and Maria.

Maria may only be a bird, but she's as tough as nails. Fighting the forces of darkness... in a frock.



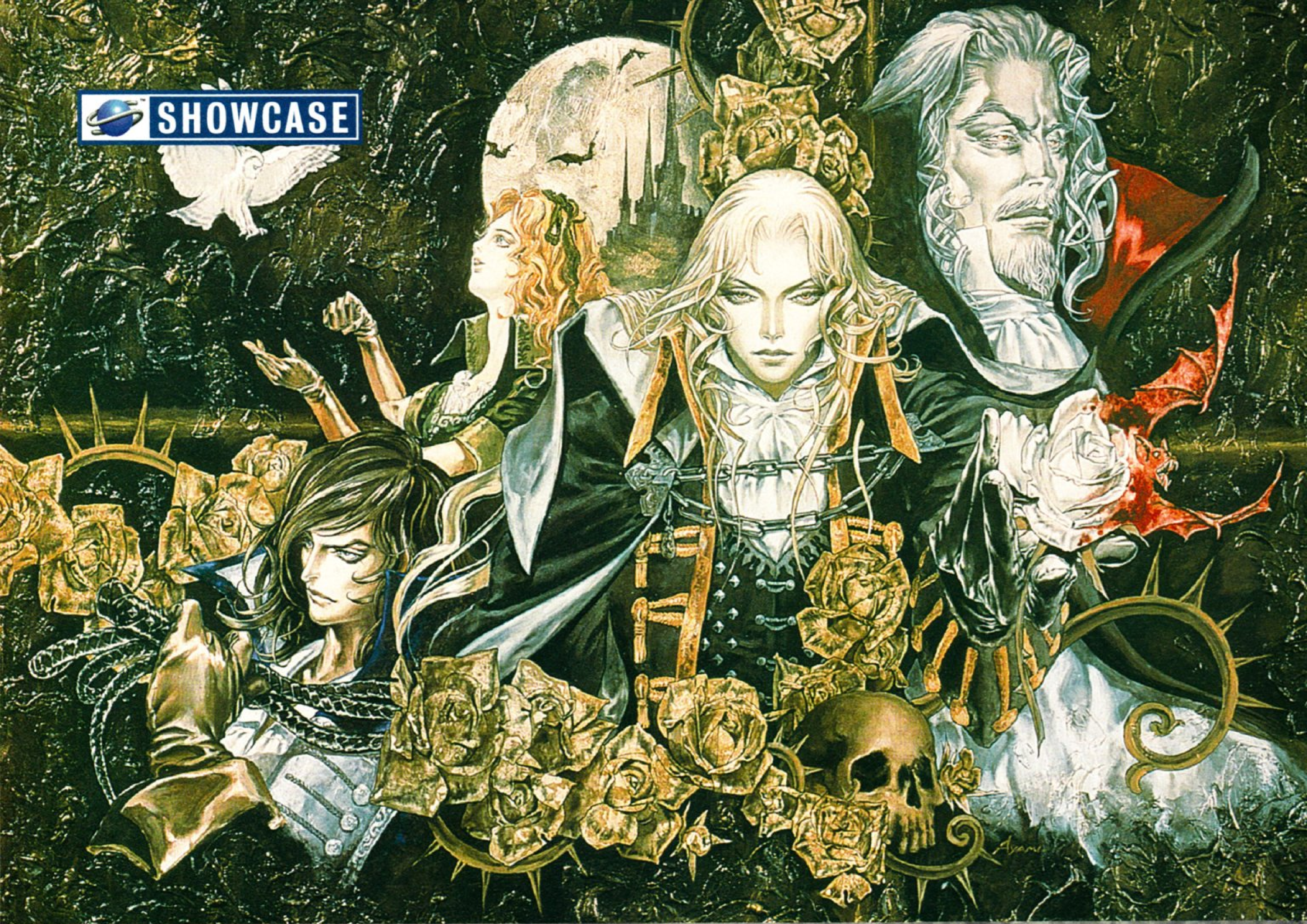








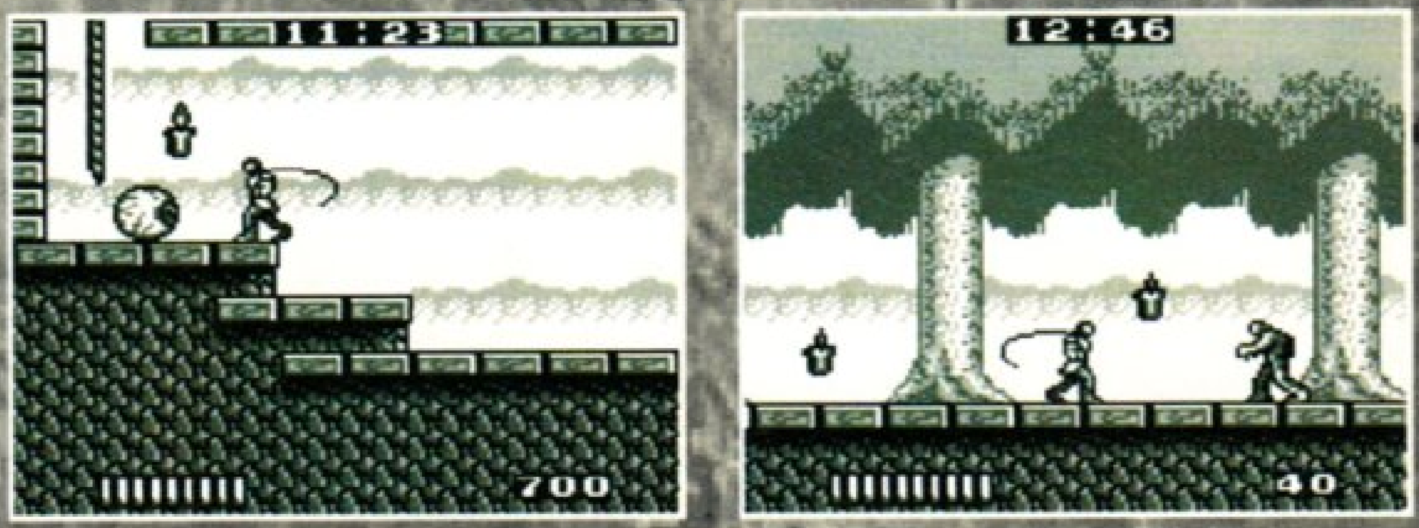
Konami's programming talents have certainly pushed the Saturn's 2D abilities to the limit.



TIMELINE OF TERROR

The History of Castlevania

Very few videogame series stand the test of time, but Konami's Castlevania series has managed to provide more than a few surprises over the years. With Castlevania X: Symphony of the Night for the PlayStation and now Saturn, the series has reached a new generation of gamers. However, Castlevania didn't earn its impressive reputation over night.



▲ The Castle Adventure was the first Game Boy title in the series.



▲ Remember this classic? The original Castlevania debuted on the NES waaay back in 1987.

Since 1987, when the first game appeared, the Castlevania series has earned a loyal following. Almost everyone who has played any game in the series loves it, and anyone who hates the series probably hasn't played it at all!

One of the most enthralling aspects of Castlevania is its story. So far, each game has fit perfectly within a century-spanning storyline. Originally, Castlevania was planned as a Star Wars style epic, with three games set in the past, three set in the present, and three set in the future. However, it now looks like that idea has been scrapped, as more games take place in the past (although Bloodlines was the most contemporary of the Castlevania titles, as it takes place in the early 1900s). To get SSM readers up to speed, here's the complete Castlevania timeline to date with important characters and events included. Some of the entries don't actually take place in a specific year, so we've used a bit of artistic licence in the compilation of this trip through yesteryear...



▲ Castlevania II: Simon's quest was as tough...

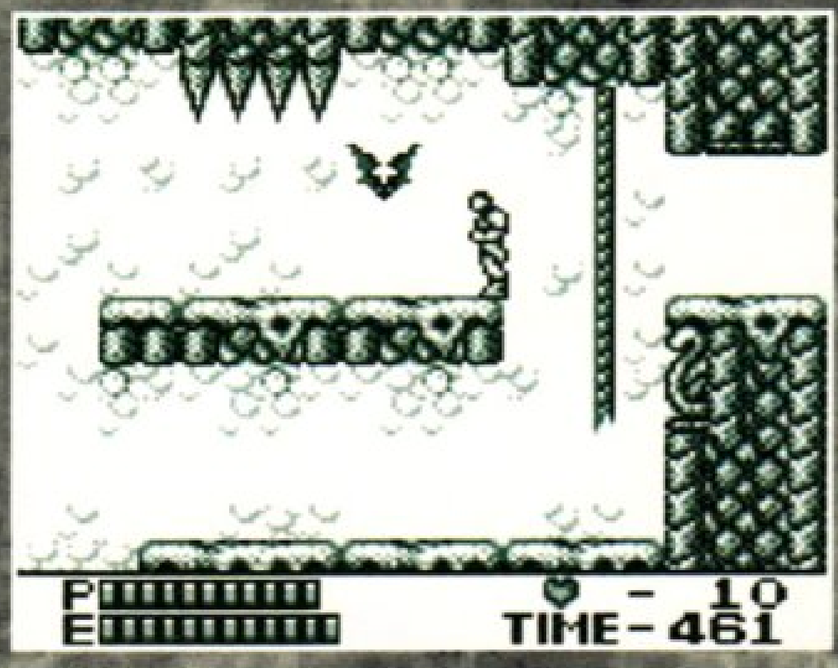


▲ ...as the first, with new creatures and weapons.



▲ 1990 saw the Japanese release of Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse.





▲ Castlevania II: Belmont's Revenge was (and still is) a truly tough 8-bit title.




▲ Possibly the finest game in the series, Super Castlevania IV was released in 1991.






▲ Eric Lecarde battles the forces of evil in the Megadrive game, Castlevania: Bloodlines.

1421: Elizabeth Bartley
Count Dracula's niece, Elizabeth Bartley, was put to death after she was found guilty of being a vampire.

1431: Count Dracula
Dracula was at the height of his power and fully terrorised the country of Transylvania.

1450: Sonia Belmont
Sonia is the first female Belmont character in the Castlevania series. Sonia is also the main character in an upcoming Castlevania title for Game Boy. The game has no title yet, but apparently Alucard also makes an appearance. Sonia is 17 years old.

1492: Trevor Belmont
Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse (NES, 1990)
Trevor is the originator of the Belmont "warrior chromosomes" and takes the centre stage in Dracula's Curse, the biggest and best of the 8-bit titles. Along his perilous journey to Dracula's castle, one of three characters could join Trevor: Sypha Belnades, a sorcerer, Grant DaNasty, a thief, and Alucard, Dracula's rebellious son (who appears again in Symphony of the Night). The Japanese version of Castlevania III was an easier game, and Sypha's character was a woman.

1592: Christopher Belmont
The Castlevania Adventure (Game Boy, 1990)
Christopher Belmont was limited to just two Castlevania titles - both for the Game Boy.

1607: Christopher Belmont
Castlevania II: Belmont's Revenge (Game Boy, 1991)
Christopher's son, Soleiyu, is kidnapped by Dracula. Christopher takes on Dracula again in the hope of finding his son alive.

1692: Simon Belmont
Castlevania (NES, 1987)
Super Castlevania IV (Super NES, 1991)
Simon Belmont took up the battle 100 years after Trevor defeated Count Dracula. Super Castlevania IV is actually a remake of the first 8-bit title and possibly one of the best games in the series.

1699: Simon Belmont
Castlevania II: Simon's Quest (NES, 1988)
Simon Belmont discovers he was cursed by Dracula to die a slow and agonising death. To lift the curse, he must revive Dracula and then destroy him.



1792: Richter Belmont
Dracula X (PC Engine, 1993)
Castlevania: Dracula X (Super NES, 1995)
Richter's story is set long after Simon's games. Dracula X introduced Maria, Richter's sister in-law. Although she is not of the Belmont vampire hunter bloodline, she has super powers nonetheless. Richter is 17 years old; Maria is 11.

1798: Alucard
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night (PlayStation, 1997; Saturn, 1998)
Alucard awakens from his self-imposed eternal slumber only to sense that Dracula is going to be revived. Alucard sets off to Dracula's Castle in the hope of stopping his father once and for all. Symphony of the Night's ending opens up a potential relationship between Maria and Alucard, which will (hopefully) be explained in future titles.

1892: Eric LeCarde is born in Segovia, Spain

1895: John Morris is born in Texas, USA

1897: Quincy Morris dies
The latest Belmont descendant, Quincy dies moments after defeating Dracula. Watching in the shadows are his son (John) and his best friend (Eric).

1917: Elizabeth Bartley is revived and rejuvenated.
Castlevania: Bloodlines (Megadrive, 1994)
Drolta Tzuentes, an amateur witch, accidentally brings Elizabeth Bartley back to life. Bartley immediately makes plans to revive Count Dracula. John Morris, Quincy's son and latest vampire killer in the Belmont bloodline, joins his friend Eric LeCarde. LeCarde's girlfriend, Gwendolyn, was turned into a vampire by Bartley.

That's where the Castlevania timeline ends... for now. However, with an N64 title looming on the horizon, as well as potential PlayStation and Dreamcast games, this chilling saga is thankfully far from over!





▲ Dreamcast Castlevania? These pics from the 3D N64 game hint at what might be...

BY	KONAMI			
RELEASE	JUNE 25 (JAPAN)			PLAYERS
HARDWARE		PRICE	IMPORT	1
N/A		STYLE	2D PLATFORMER	

Did you know that Konami's Castlevania series celebrated its 10th anniversary last year? Few games attain this kind of history and with Symphony of the Night, the series looks set to have a frightening future.




▲ Top 2D sprite action ahoy! Castlevania X is awesome!

Castlevania X



▲ The game offers three playable characters including this month's cover star, the sultry Maria. Yum...

Castlevania X is the latest offering from Konami's vampiric 2D platform series and has already been released in the UK on PlayStation. In a unique twist, players take on the role of Dracula's heroic son, Alucard (try reading that one backwards...), instead of employing the talents of the legendary, bat-slaying Belmont family. With the aid of magical weapons, devastating spells and animal helpers, old fang face explores the castle's 1000+ rooms, battling nightmare creatures and attempting to halt the nefarious plans of his undead dad.

With the Saturn's life expectancy now in doubt, it's somewhat surprising to see Konami Japan releasing a 2D title of this calibre. While there are certainly plenty of 2D platform game fans out there, the current trend for all things 3D usually dictates that this 'lost' style of game has been forced out of the market. It's encouraging then to discover that Castlevania X is real trip down memory lane. In terms of both gameplay and visuals, Castlevania screams "Megadrive!" at you and has prompted a number of derogatory comments from member of the SSM team. Yes, the game does look decidedly 16-bit, even with a handful of 3D effects thrown in, but it's Konami's classic gameplay that shines through and makes this title a must-have purchase.



As a solid action/adventure title,Castlevania X is without equal. Previous games in the series have required players to complete one level, tackle a massive boss then move onto the next stage. In Castlevania X, Konami has taken more of a Super Metroid approach, with huge interconnected levels just begging to be explored and it's now possible for players to reenter the castle's many rooms at any time in order to gain vital power-ups. Unlike the PlayStation version, the Saturn game features three playable characters, with Maria's triple jumps and dash



▲ The Cursed Prison: can you find this extra hidden stage?

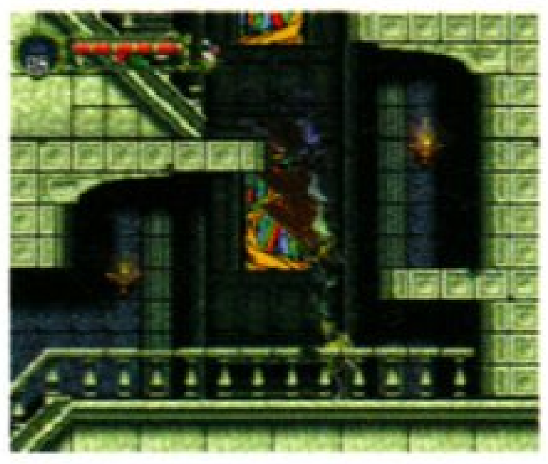
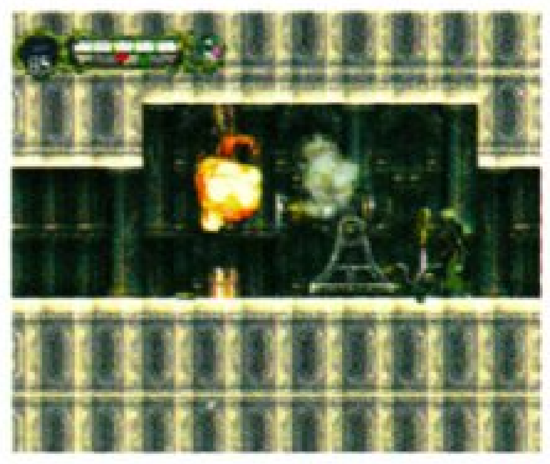



▲ Items and weapons are scattered throughout the game.



▲ Defeat bosses to gain power-ups and magical attacks.

[Castlevania X is more than just a PlayStation conversion... it's an EXCLUSIVE Saturn title!]

THE MONSTER SQUAD

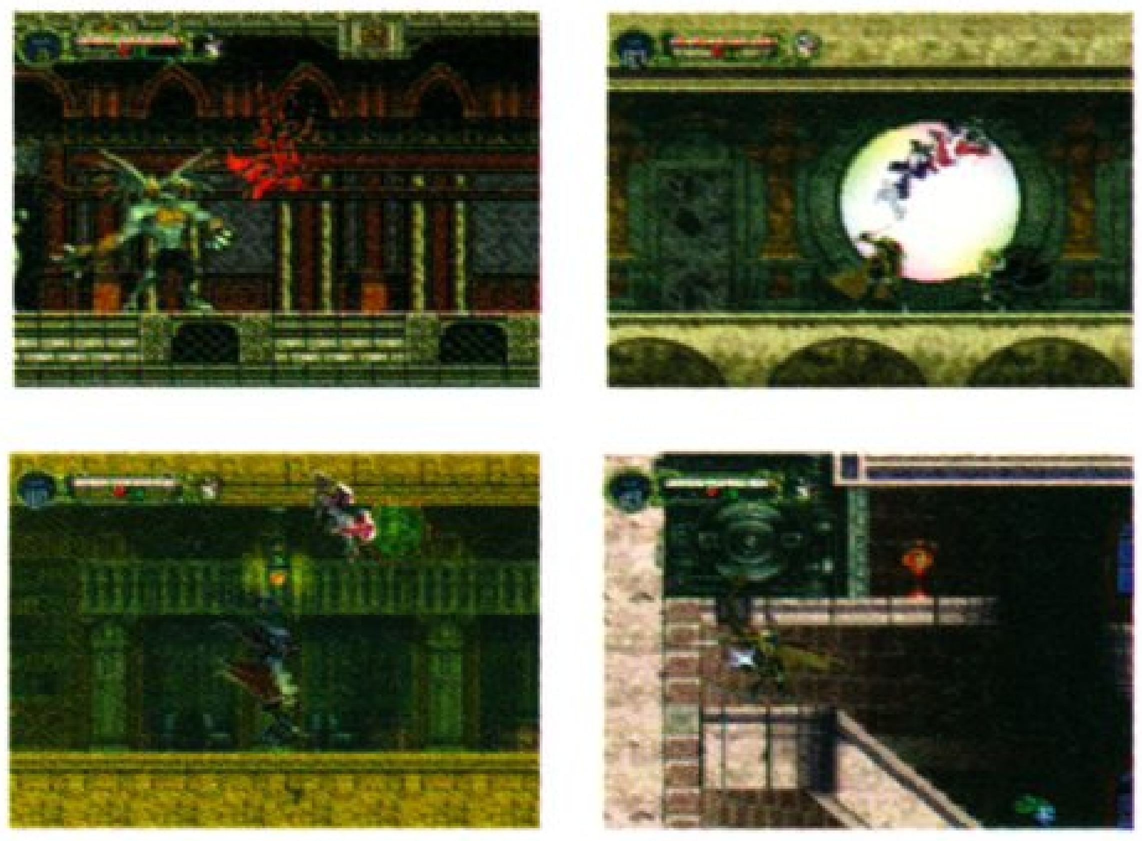
Almost beating Treasure at its own game, Konami has populated Castlevania with some truly amazing and inventive creatures. Minor monsters are extremely detailed and well-animated, but it's the game's bosses that have to be seen in action to be really appreciated. Possessed demon swords, multi-headed Hydra, giant animated skeletons, two screen high armoured warriors and even Death itself make an appearance. In fact Castlevania X has got the lot!







▲ Just one of the many ludicrous, over-the-top bosses to be found lurking within Castlevania's scary stages.



▲ It may be 2D, but Castlevania X is a great Saturn game.

kicks proving extremely useful and Richter Belmont's whipping talents giving the game that nostalgic Castlevania feel.

However, playing as Alucard proves to be the game's real challenge as his powers and weapons are stripped away early on, forcing players to locate items and abilities hidden in the castle's many levels. Try battling though the game's initial stages, armed only with a pathetic knife, and you soon discover just how tough and ingenious Konami's game engine really is. As well as two additional characters, the Saturn version of Castlevania X also receives a boost with a further two hidden levels - the Underground Garden and Cursed Prison - testing the abilities of even seasoned platform gamers.

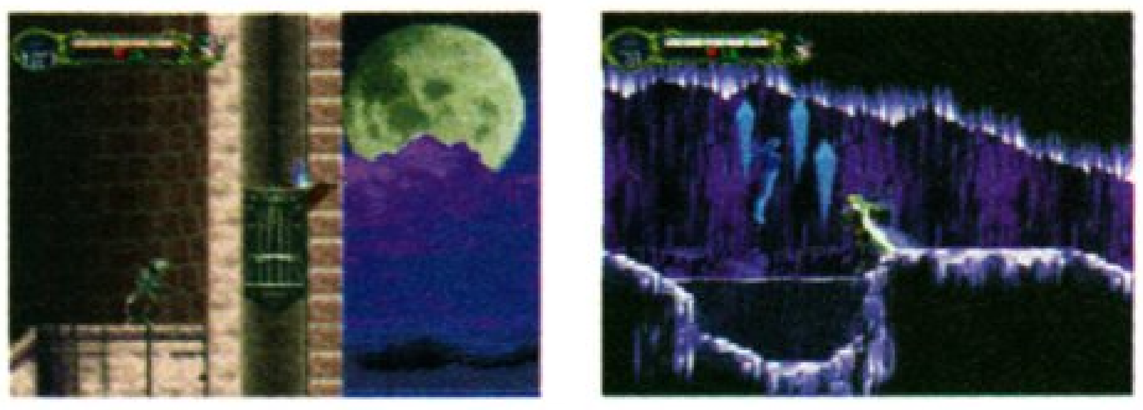
But wait...there's more! If Castlevania's stunning 2D visuals and quality gameplay weren't enough to make you fork out for this hot import title, a round of applause definitely goes to the fantastic in-game music. A sweeping orchestral soundtrack perfectly compliments the game's spooky atmosphere
and Konami's in-house musicians deserve a pat on the back for what must be the finest videogame musical score EVER created!

Konami's success with the PlayStation version of Castlevania X shows that there are still gamers out there looking for quality 2D platform titles, so it's disappointing that this little gem will never be released in the UK. Still, as an essential import title, Castlevania X is guaranteed to give converted Saturn owners many a sleepless night...

MATT YEO



▲ The Underground Garden: yet another secret stage.



▲ Take it from us, you'll be playing Castlevania X for weeks.

FANCY A RIDE?

While most of the game requires players to dash around on foot, attempting to stop the ancient forces of evil, Castlevania X also contains other modes of transport. Strategically located in a number of locations are key warp gates. Step inside them and you're instantly teleported to another gate elsewhere in the castle. Likewise, lifts and elevators also help cut down on the old boot leather, but our favourite mode of transport has to be the spooky boatman who punts players across the frozen underground lake. Brrr...



GRAPHICS	Treasure and Capcom may rule the 2D roost, but Castlevania's gorgeous visuals are a wonder to behold.	**90%**
SOUND	Bonus music tracks unavailable in the PlayStation game and the greatest videogame soundtrack in existence.	**97%**
PLAYABILITY	Playing as Alucard is frustrating at times, but ingenious weapons, spells and magical transformations add plenty of variety.	**91%**
LASTABILITY	Locating all the 1000+ rooms will take players ages, two bonus levels are hidden away and then there's the upside down castle...	**92%**

OVERALL

Challenging gameplay, stunning music tracks and secrets galore make Castlevania X a red-hot import game!

94%

▼ Multiple layers of parallax scrolling prove the Saturn's still got what it takes to produce top 2D platformers.



BY	JALECO		
RELEASE	OUT NOW	PLAYERS	1
HARDWARE	N/A	PRICE	IMPORT
		STYLE	DRIVING

Probably the last Model 2 conversion to make it onto Sega's powerhouse console is Jaleco's long-awaited GT 24. Currently receiving rave reviews in the Nippon, SSM puts this racer through its paces.

GT 24



▲ A Touring Car-beater it most certainly isn't.





▲ Hey Jaleco, where's the two-player mode?



▲ GT 24 is a bit Ridge Racer-esque in places.





▲ For some reason those crazy Japs love GT 24.



▲ Pit stops add an element of strategy to the proceedings.

It's fair to say that here at SSM, we're constantly bemused by the inexplicably high review marks lavished upon second-rate dross by the Japanese press. Maybe they have less stringent reviewing procedures than their European counterparts, or maybe it's the strange mind-altering substances they brew in their mystical 'herbal' teas. Hmm... Whatever the case, there's no getting away from the fact that Jaleco's conversion of their Model 2 racer is yet another example of this blatant over-rating, as it's actually a bit naff.

This comes as quite a surprise, considering the incredible success of Tecmo's conversion of their Model 2 fighter, Dead or Alive. A similarly close conversion of GT 24 was not unfairly expected, but clearly it was beyond the grasp of Jaleco's coding talent. It's a shame really, as Saturn owners have long been starved of a decent arcade racer on their powerhouse console.

So what's the problem? Well for starters, the visuals are well below the standard we've come to expect from recent arcade-to-Saturn conversions. Although the frame rate runs at a decent lick of speed, it has to be said that GT 24 lacks the polish and visual refinement of comparative titles. Polygon





▲ Car control is made simpler with the analogue pad.

glitching is a regular occurrence, with track side scenery appearing and disappearing at random, especially when adopting the in-car perspective. This is compounded by some particularly rough texturing-mapping and a noticeably close draw-in distance. This really is unacceptable - the sort of problems we'd expect from a first generation Saturn title rather than one of the last.

Having established that GT 24 isn't exactly the best looking Saturn game money can buy, the gameplay is slightly more worthy of praise. The three circuits present a stern challenge to players, with a gruelling series of high and low speed corners, chicanes and hairpin bends requiring precision control to successfully negotiate. The cars themselves handle fairly well with the standard digital pad, though more accurate control is offered by the near-



▲ GT 24 looks decent enough in the screen shots, but it's an entirely different story when the game is actually running.



▲ Considering the nigh-on arcade-perfect Dead or Alive conversion, GT 24 is a real let down.



▲ Anal race fanatics are well catered for, with a gruelling real time 24 hour race mode.





▲ Importers will probably charge a fortune for this rubbish.



▲ Only three tracks (with mirror mode) is a bit crap.

essential analogue controller, allowing for a much smoother turning curve.

However, GT 24 is let down badly by the distinct lack of gameplay variations and secret options demanded by the finicky home console owner. We would have liked to have seen a decent split-screen two-player mode, custom car options, time release features and hidden tracks. No such luck. Rather Jaleco have bunged in a couple of extra cars and a handful of extra game modes, making GT 24 a very shallow and short-lived experience.

As you've no doubt gleamed by now, we came away very disappointed with Jaleco's GT 24. It consummately fails to live up to the high standards set by Sega's own Model 2 conversions, lacking the visual impact and depth of play of comparative titles. Best avoided really.

LEE NUTTER

SHADES OF TOURING CAR

Yep. That's what we thought too when we first saw GT 24. Both were originally Model 2 racers and both received decidedly dodgy Saturn conversions. They both suffer from similarly flawed graphics engines, with polygon glitching and warping, clipping problems and ugly 'grainy' textures. GT 24 is actually a tad smoother than Touring Car, but all things considered, Touring Car is clearly the better of the two. Though not one of our favourite games of all time, the wealth of gameplay variations and sheer speed of Touring Car elevate it way above GT 24.



[Jaleco's GT 24 fails to live up to the high standards set by Sega's own Model 2 conversions]

GRAPHICS	A poor graphics engine results in some noticeable clipping problems, grainy textures and irritating polygon glitching.	**55%**
SOUND	There are some decent engine noises and background tunes in there. Nothing to get excited about though.	**71%**
PLAYABILITY	Not bad with the analogue pad, but GT 24 lacks the thrills 'n' spills of Sega's own pedigree of racers.	**58%**
LASTABILITY	Only three tracks, a handful of vehicles and a small amount of home features makes GT 24 a very short-lived experience.	**50%**

OVERALL

A disappointing conversion of Jaleco's competent arcade racer. Best avoided if you value your sanity.

54%

▼ If you're after a decent arcade racer, you could do a lot better than Jaleco's poor conversion of GT 24.



推奨年齢

Matters Of Import

全年齢

Vampire Savior, Metal Slug, GunGriffon II... all amazing Saturn games, all available on import only. Want to play the greatest Japanese Sega titles that'll never come out over here? Hey, that's what Matters of Import is here for folks!

Tennis Arena

Not exactly known for its amazing sports sims, Ubi Soft ventures into the world of nets, rackets and strawberries & cream with Tennis Arena. Receiving a glowing recommendation from none other than Lee Nutter himself last issue, the game arrives in import shops just in time for this Summer's lawn-based event and proves to be a solid sports title.

With a wealth of options and playability, Tennis Arena looks likely to be a surprise Saturn hit during the hot and sticky few months ahead. Players have access to a handful of polygon-constructed tennis pros and detailed courts before play commences, each of which affects the outcome of forthcoming matches. Pick indoor and outdoor courts and even play an the deck of a ship! Gameplay is as you'd expect spot-on, being both an accurate representation of the sport and fun for lengthy bouts of ball-bashing. Some artistic licence has been used with regard to players being able to perform 'Super Shots' which blast their way across the court, but other than that Tennis Arena proves itself to be a real winner in our eyes.

PLAYING IMPORTS

If you own a UK Saturn, you're missing out on a whole new dimension of gaming - hence the Matters of Import section. To play Japanese (or indeed American) Saturn games on your Euro machine there are two ways you can do it:

1. Get a Converter Cartridge

The Datel Action Replay (amongst others) allows you to play imported software on your machine. However, the games will run in PAL mode, meaning a letterbox display and speed loss. This is the easiest way of running imports, but you're missing out on a vast raft of benefits.

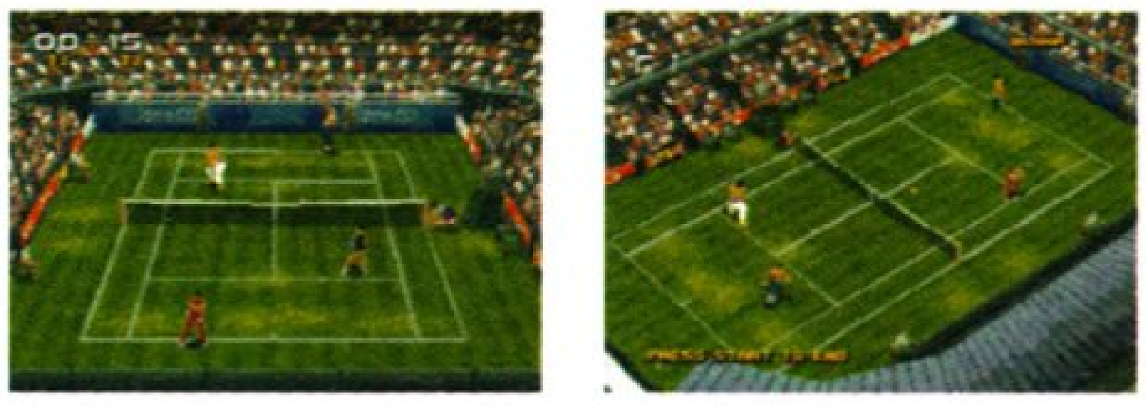
2. Get "Switched"

Take your machine to an importer and get him to add two switches to your machine. The first switch is the country select – US, UK or Japan. Just move the switch to match the country of origin of the software of your choice. The second switch is better though. This allows you to change the display of your Saturn. US and Japanese Saturns run the screen at a higher rate and gives a full-screen image (as opposed to the letterbox effect seen on most PAL titles) and your UK machine can be used in the same way. The problem here is that you need a SCART TV and one that's compatible with a "60Hz signal". Most modern TVs (definitely all Phillips and Sony ones) should be okay. And no, you can't run a 60Hz signal through a SCART video. If you're using a RF unit as opposed to a SCART lead, you can't reap the benefits of this particular switch and to be honest, you're better off getting the converter cartridge. The other REALLY cool thing about the 60Hz switch is that poor PAL conversions of games (all Capcom titles, Sonic R amongst others) suddenly run a lot faster and with a full screen display!

It's somewhat unfortunate, but the fact is that to get the most out of your Saturn you're going to need to buy import...



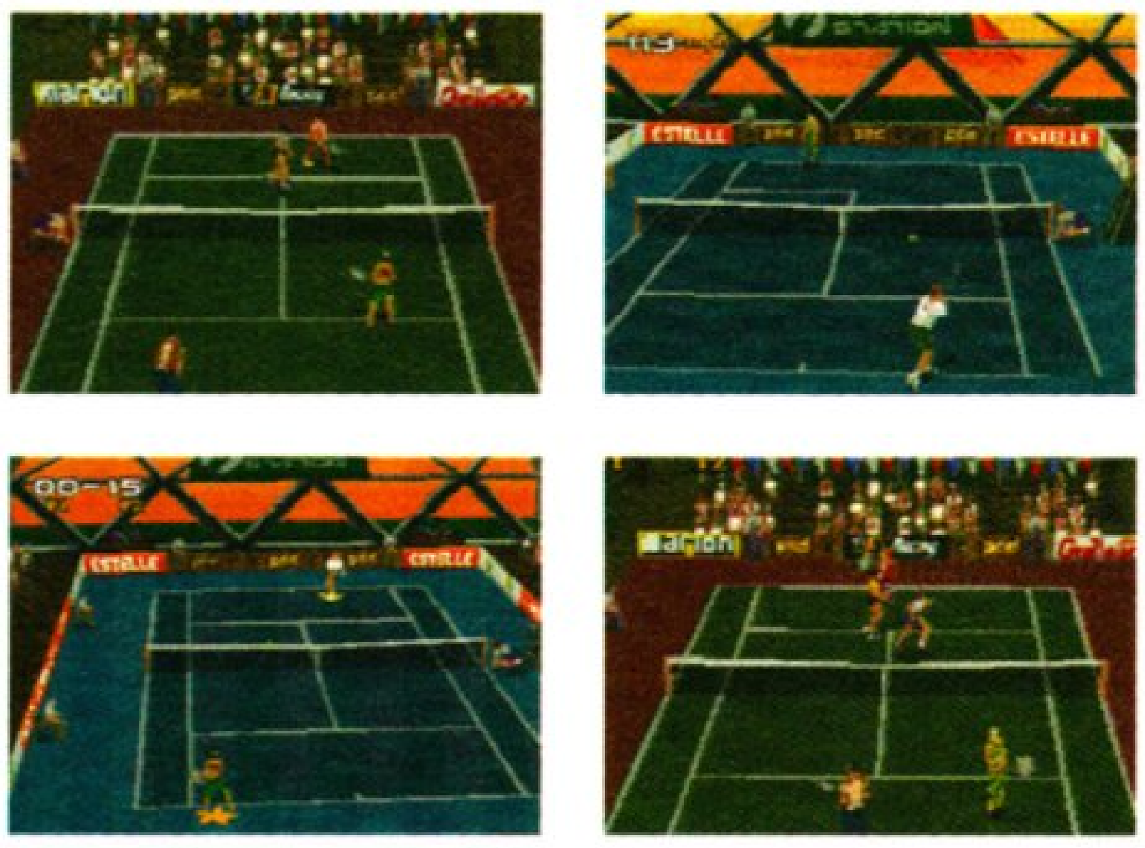
▲ The poor, unsuspecting tennis fans on board the Titanic...



▲ There are a number of courts to select from.



▲ Multiple viewpoints and replays are pretty good.



▲ Hot two and four player action in full effect.

GRAPHICS	81%
SOUND	83%
PLAYABILITY	89%
LASTABILITY	86%

OVERALL

There are hardly a wealth of quality bat 'n' ball titles on the Saturn and as such Tennis Arena is a smashing sports sim.

86%

Dragon Force II





▲ Not a Shining Force III beater, but still cool.



We know you love indecipherable Japanese RPGs, that's why we cover them indepth every month. Joining the likes of Grandia, Shining Force III: Part 2 and Phantasy Star Collection this issue is Dragon Force II, the sequel to last year's successful fantasy outing.

Fans of the first game (and there are plenty of you out there) will be familiar with the game's 2D sword and sorcery antics, as huge armies sweep majestically across impressive landscapes and indulge in a spot of combat. Obviously the game's plot will be totally lost to us poor Western gamers, but there's still plenty of fun to be had with Dragon Force II. Battles are easy to work out and a bit of trial-and-error should get you past the game's unintelligible storyline, so it's well worth sticking with. Better than Grandia? Not by a long shot, but then neither was the first game.



▲ Impressive cutscenes break up the game's intensive battles. Of course they're all in Japanese, so we haven't got a clue.



▲ Hmm... ever wondered what happened to Mystic Meg?





▲ Battle sequences feature screens packed with action.







▲ With two games in the series, will Sega produce a third?



▲ There are some genuinely touching moments *sniff!*

IMPORTS INFO

So who are these "import" fellas who'll set you up with these wonderful games? Try out these dudes. If YOU'RE an importer with a vast range of Saturn imports and we HAVEN'T listed you below, contact us via email (virtua.writer@ecm.emap.com) and let us know! We'll add you to the list.

Videogames Centre (Bournemouth):	01202 527314
Chips (Middlesbrough)	01642 873387
Project K (Essex):	0181 508 1328
Beyond Therapy (London):	0171 434 0755
Game Raiders (London):	0171 434 2220
CA Games (Glasgow):	0141 334 3901
Computer Exchange (London):	0171 636 2666
Computer Exchange (Harrow):	0181 427 5800
Raven Games (London):	0181 663 6822
Fantasy World (Stoke on Trent):	01782 279294
Loaded Consoles (Tonbridge):	01622 871544
Oakland Consoles (Northern Ireland):	01232 713366
Oakland Consoles (Stoke on Trent):	01782 857624
Oakland Consoles (South Shields):	01914 270969
Oakland Consoles (Plymouth):	01752 667100

GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	88%
LASTABILITY	82%

OVERALL

More of the same really. Packed with Japanese text, but the game's battle sequences are well worth the price of admission.

84%

SEGA SATURN™ tips

Football, Wimbledon, cool games from Japan, being lazy - it's something of a miracle that we have a Tips page at all this month! Still, we have, so er... that's the end of that. Richard wasn't too happy with my ground-breaking idea to leave these two pages blank as "some kind of notepad for the readers," so Tips it is. Have fun, and send in your tips and questions to: SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE Tips, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ

BURNING RANGERS

Is it out yet? It must be. Surely it's in the shops by now, it's July for God's sake! Anyway, assuming that it is out, and that you've bought or stolen yourself a copy, here are a few passwords to try out.

PLAY AS BIG
To play Mission One as Big, enter the password 3BIG2BPLCK at the mission selection screen. To play Mission Two, enter the password VZ5BIG5PGW. You need to have completed the game first.





▲ So, is Burning Rangers ace or what? Yep - ace it is.

PLAY AS CHRIS
To play Mission One as Chris, enter the password DH5CHRIS5H at the mission selection screen. Once again, this only works after you've completed the game.



PLAY AS IRIA
To play Mission One as Iria, enter the password HTL2IRIA5O at the mission selection screen. Completion requirements are in place.

PLAY AS LEAD PHOENIX
To play Mission One as Lead Phoenix, enter the password GS4LEAD2ZU at the mission selection screen. To play Mission Three, enter the password 2LEAD6DHUY. But only [chorus] "After you've completed the game."

TILLIS WITH MAIN THEME
Enter the password NM3TILLIS5 to play as Tillis with the ace Burning Rangers theme song playing over the station loudspeakers.

SOUND TEST
Complete the game, then enter the password NAVIXXTEST in the mission select screen to open the amazing ability to, quite literally, TEST the SOUND! BGM 12 is my favourite.

EXTRAS
PC or Mac-owning readers should know to do this every time by now - check the CD for some cool artwork in the 'extras' folder.



VAMPIRE SAVIOR

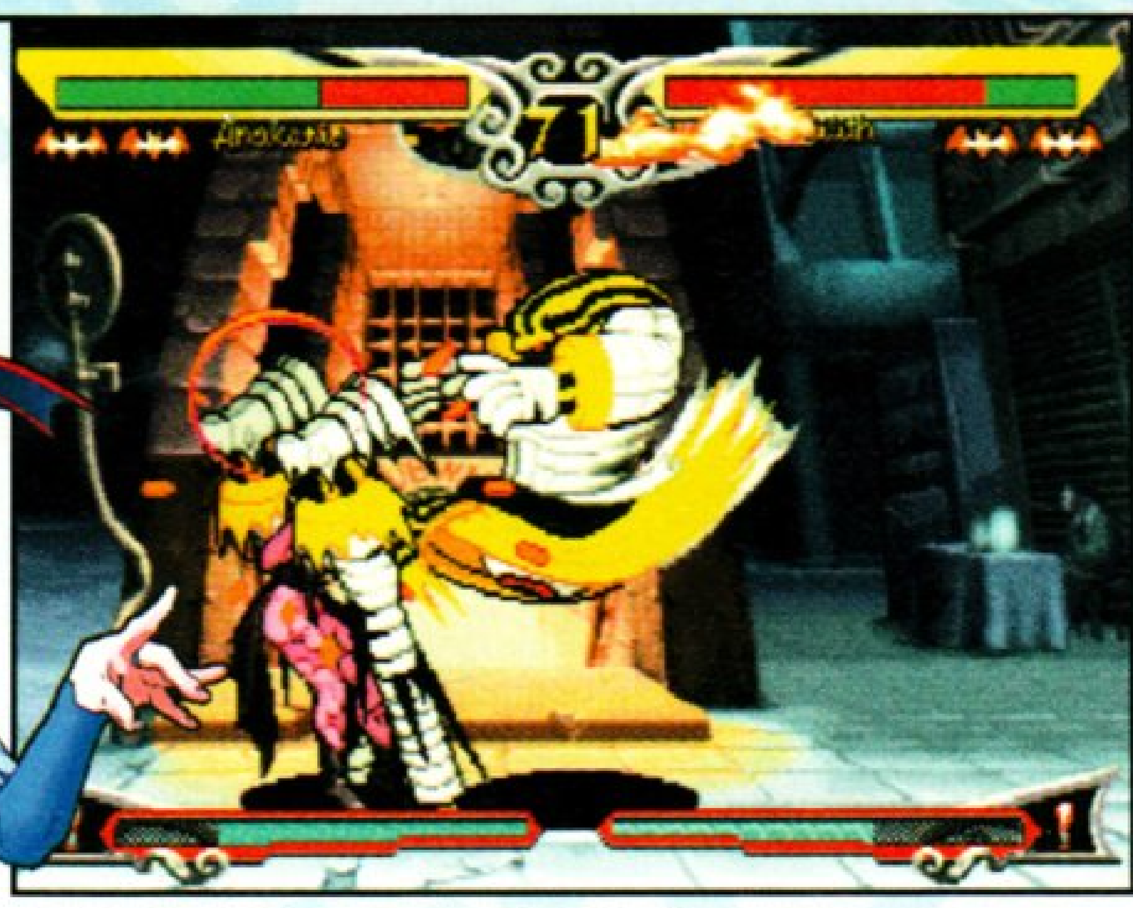
I'll let you into a secret - vampires don't really drink blood, it's just strong Ribena. They don't seem quite so scary now, do they? And werewolves? Just tickle their tummies and tell them to sit.



CHANGE COSTUME
When selecting your fighter, press all three punch buttons or all three kick buttons to receive the character's seventh and eighth choice of kit.

CHANGE STAGE BACKGROUND
After you've selected your fighter in Versus Mode, pick a stage and **hold Top Left and Press A** to change the background colour.

EX OPTIONS
This is really useful. Complete the game without continuing, then go to the title screen, **highlight Option** and **hold down Top Left and Top Right** then **press Start**. Now you should enter a new option screen, which allows you to fiddle with some new options, and best of all, change ALL of the Japanese text to English!



▲ An English language mode? That's very nice of Capcom.

PLAY AS DARK GALLON
When selecting a fighter, **press Top Left + X + Y + Z** at the same time. Gallon's colour should start flashing to indicate it worked.

PLAY AS SHADOW
Highlight the Random Select option, then **press the Top Left and Top Right** buttons **five times**. Keep 'em held down on the fifth press, then hit **X + Y + Z** to select your fighter. If you win, the Soul Stealer will possess the character you've just defeated, and you'll fight the next round with the guy you've just beaten. Weird or what?

RANDOM STAGE SELECT
In versus mode, **press Top Right** before selecting a stage for randomised background action.

WINNING POSE SELECT
A nice easy one to end with - press any one of the six punch and kick buttons to select your character's victory pose.

▼ It's only available in Japan - surely that's enough motivation to get your Saturn switched?

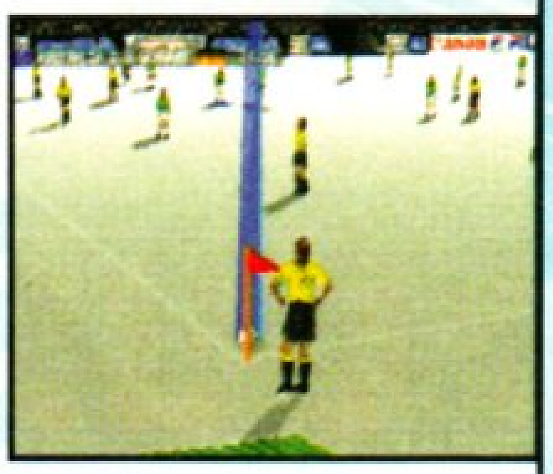




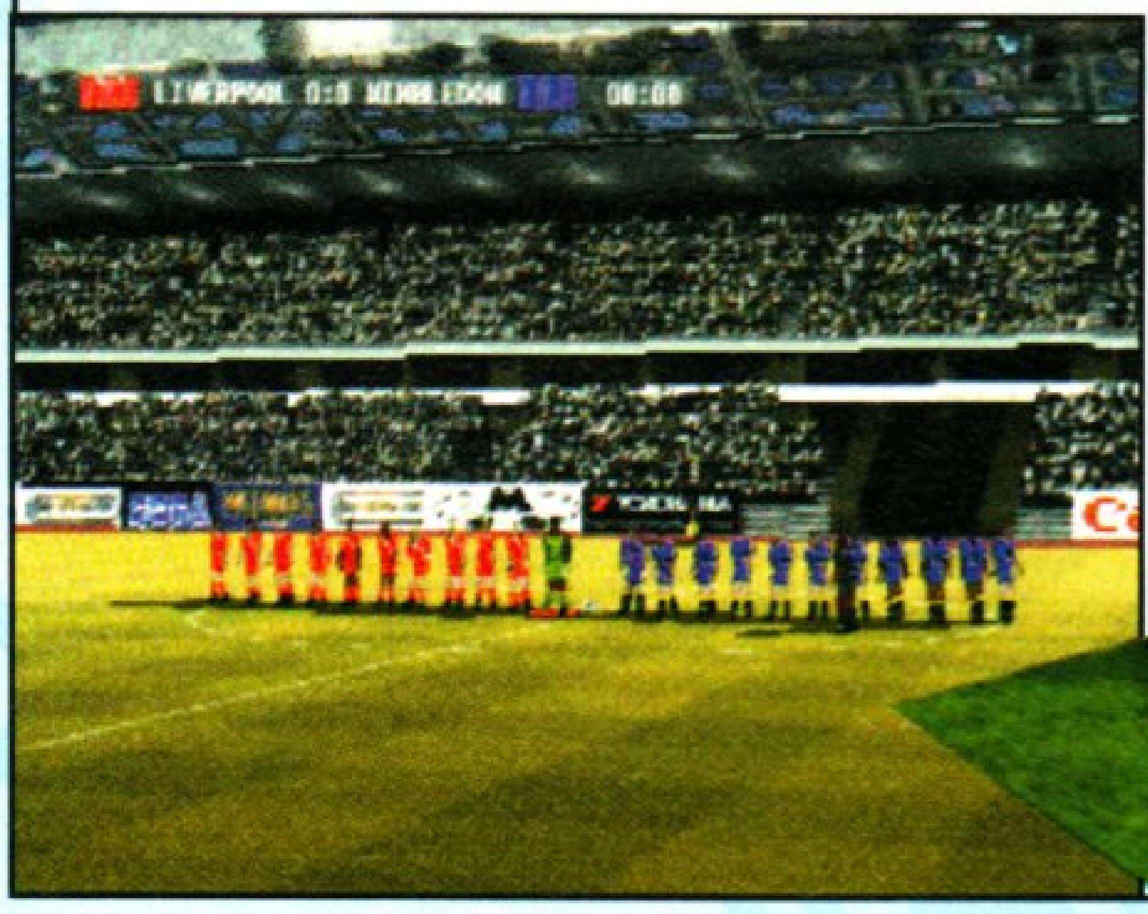
WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '98

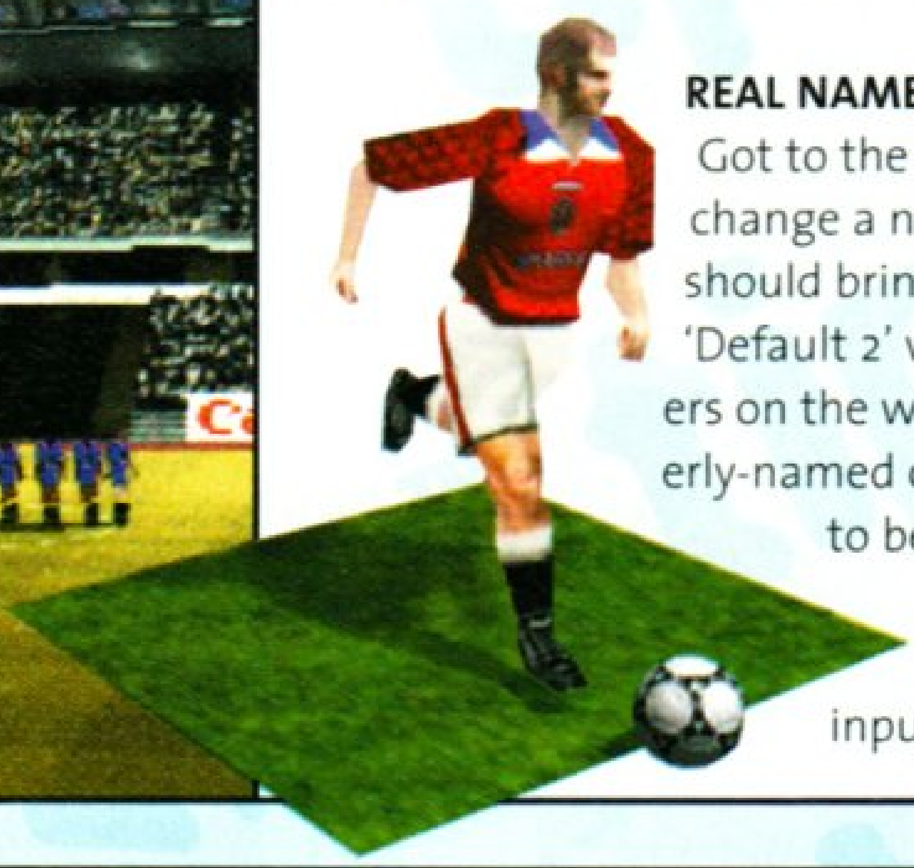
Fed up of playing with fake characters like Paul Whince, Gareth Northgate and Freddy Sheringham? Then you need the 'real names' cheat in World League Soccer '98! We're not sure if we're allowed to print this, what with it being a bit of a legal 'grey area' and all that, but hey, in celebration of the World Cup we'll take that risk!





▲ Comiserations to all of our Scottish readers...





REAL NAMES

Got to the Player Edit screen, and change a name to 'teamtwo'. This should bring up an option called 'Default 2' which changes the players on the whole team to their properly-named counterparts! This needs to be done for each team, but it does save to memory once you've inputted the cheat.

PANZER DRAGOON SAGA

Basically, there are loads and loads of things for players to discover in here, with a lot of the fun coming from discovering them yourself - fun which we're about to destroy right now!



▲ There, there. Nice dragon! Good boy! Walkies!

TRI-BURST GUN UPGRADE

When you go to Zoah, talk to Radgam the Hunter during the daytime. Keep talking to him and trying to touch his gun (snigger) and he starts giving you a test. Answer his questions correctly and he gives you the Tri-burst weapon upgrade.

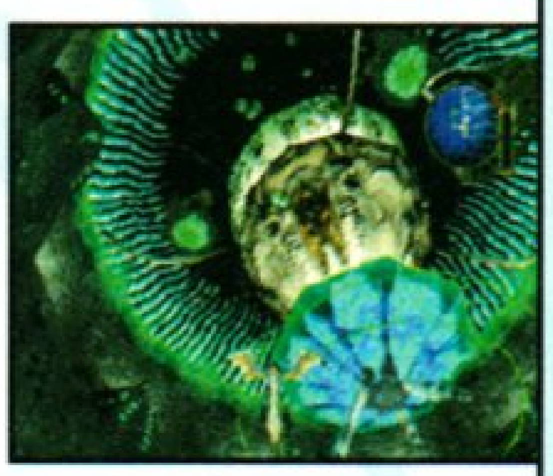
COLOUR FIDDLE

Press Start on the player two pad - this allows various buttons on this pad to alter the colour and brightness of the enemies in the View Enemy Data section.

EXTRA BERSERK ATTACK - ASTRAL PHANTOMS

A lovely little cheat. Basically, just be really nice to your dragon - pet him, smile at him and give him a lot of attention, and he eventually learns the new attack all by himself. Giving him a name at the start helps too, along with waiting until morning so he gets a good night's sleep!





▲ There's still piles to find... let us know how you do.

BABY DRAGON

Once you have the Eye Wing Dragon, go to Shellcoof and access all of the pyramids surrounding the ship. Now enter it and fly to the Genesis Chamber, where you find the Ambrosias and the Dragon's Crest, plus a little dragon who will follow you around and collect items you cannot reach. Access the little dragon to get the items.



SOLO WING DRAGON

Once you become a Light Wing Dragon, return to the Forest of Zoah and go into the Red Ruins. Now enter the central structure and look for a section without a Dragon Crest on it - access it to return the Crest you're carrying to where it belongs, and this should merge you with the baby dragon to create the Solo Wing Dragon.

Q&A

Issue 29 featured an in-depth special Q&A session on your switch questions. If you missed that, here's a special cut-out-and-keep mini version for future reference purposes. And remember, you must have a switched Saturn to run ANY import games!

Q. Can I use one of those converter cartridges to play import games?

A. Yes, but the games will be bordered and running at a slightly slower speed, plus you miss out on the chance to speed up your existing PAL games.

Q. What do I need to get?

A. Make sure you get two switches fitted - one to run games from other countries and one of those essential 50/60Hz speed switches - most companies fit both switches as standard, but some charge extra for fitting both.

Q. What does the 50/60Hz switch do?

A. Japanese and American games all run at 60Hz, without the speed switch all import games will be bordered and slower on our 50Hz TVs. It also eliminates the borders and slowdown on poor quality PAL games - like Marvel Super Heroes and Sonic R - but only if you have a 60Hz compatible TV.

Q. How do I tell if my TV is 60Hz compatible?

A. Generally, SCART TVs made in the last 3-5 years will be okay. Check with the manufacturers to make sure though.

Q. What if my TV can't take a 60Hz signal?

A. You can still play foreign games, but they will have borders (similar in size to those in Sonic R and Marvel Super Heroes). If you're certain your TV can't take a 60Hz signal, it may well work out cheaper to just buy a converter cartridge and settle for playing everything in widescreen mode - the slightly slower gameplay is tough to notice if you haven't played the faster original anyway..

Q. Can I still run UK games?

A. Yes! But with a switch fitted you'll have access to all of those super-cool Japanese games like Dead or Alive, X-Men vs Street Fighter and Radiant Silvergun that we keep raving about. Convinced yet?!

Q. How much does it cost?

A. Very hard to say - it varies from £25 in smaller shops to an unfeasibly high £48 in Computer Exchange. Shop around - some places will bundle a couple of discount Japanese games in with the deal too... if you ask nicely.

Q. Where can I get it done?

A. There's a handy list of companies printed back in the Matters of Import section, but try looking for local independent shops in your area as well.

Shining Force III

Players Guide: Part One

It's a great action-packed RPG, it's got some of the finest special effects we've ever seen on the Saturn and it'll last you for ages. Oh, and it's called Shining Force III, just in case you were wondering. GARY CUTLACK gets to work...

The epic story unfolds all on its own, and thanks to the super-friendly gameplay, there's not much in the way of puzzles or challenges to get stuck on. So this guide just takes a look at the individual characters, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, and of course, giving us some more room to print bucket-loads of incredible SFIII action!







▲ This mage morphs into a colour-pulsating dragon!



▲ This one just burns your bottom with a Blaze attack.

I AM THE GOD OF HELLFIRE!

And I bring you the awesome level four Blaze attack! Grrr... hear me roar! Regular use of magic increases the level of the magic attacks, with level four being the highest, causing the most damage and being the most visually impressive. The Blaze attack gains extra range and damage points, the Spark magic grows to an incredible homing lightning extravaganza, and just seeing Synbios' Phoenix attack is enough to make even Final Fantasy VII's spells look like damp squibs.

TRAINING, TRAINING AND TRAINING!

Yep, training characters is the key to victory in SFIII. Masquirin, Grace, Irene and the rest of the weaker characters are greatly improved by experience. And there's an easy way to accomplish this too - simply use stronger characters to damage enemy warriors, then move in one of the weaker characters to take the kill. Many more experience points are awarded for a kill, meaning that even wimpy warriors like Cybel and Hayward can be built up to become half-useful characters.

MASSIVE ATTACK

And there's a nice by-product of building up a character's strength - they learn some absolutely astounding special moves! Leave Masquirin at the back never gaining any experience and she'll fail to learn the excellent strobe-like Judgment attack, while Ratchet's Rocket Blast can also be a bit of a life-saver too. And apart from looking good, these new-found attacks do as much as TWICE the amount of damage of normal hits, so get practising.



CONCISE BATTLE GUIDE!

1. Concentrate on training weak characters - their increased strength may be decisive.
2. Let those weak characters get the final blow to earn more valuable experience points.
3. Don't be afraid to retreat and heal hurt fighters.
4. Learn to sacrifice some fighters for the greater good.
5. Kamikaze attacks on enemy commanders actually work - sometimes!
6. Level two and above magic attacks can hit more than one enemy - go for the crowds.
7. If you're being attacked by two enemies, concentrate your fire on just one of them - when it's their next turn they're only able to launch one attack.
8. When attacking from two sides, try to keep a healing magician with each group for easy healing access.
9. Equip all characters with healing herbs and drops at every village.
10. Paralysed fighters can sometimes launch attacks and use items regardless - be brave!
11. Weak characters make excellent lamb-to-the-slaughter decoys to take the heat away from key team members in tough battles (harsh but fair!)
12. Attack barrels and chests left around the battlefield - they may contain key items and weapons...
13. Don't bunch character together - this leaves them vulnerable to enemies' multiple-hit magic attacks.

SYNBIOS



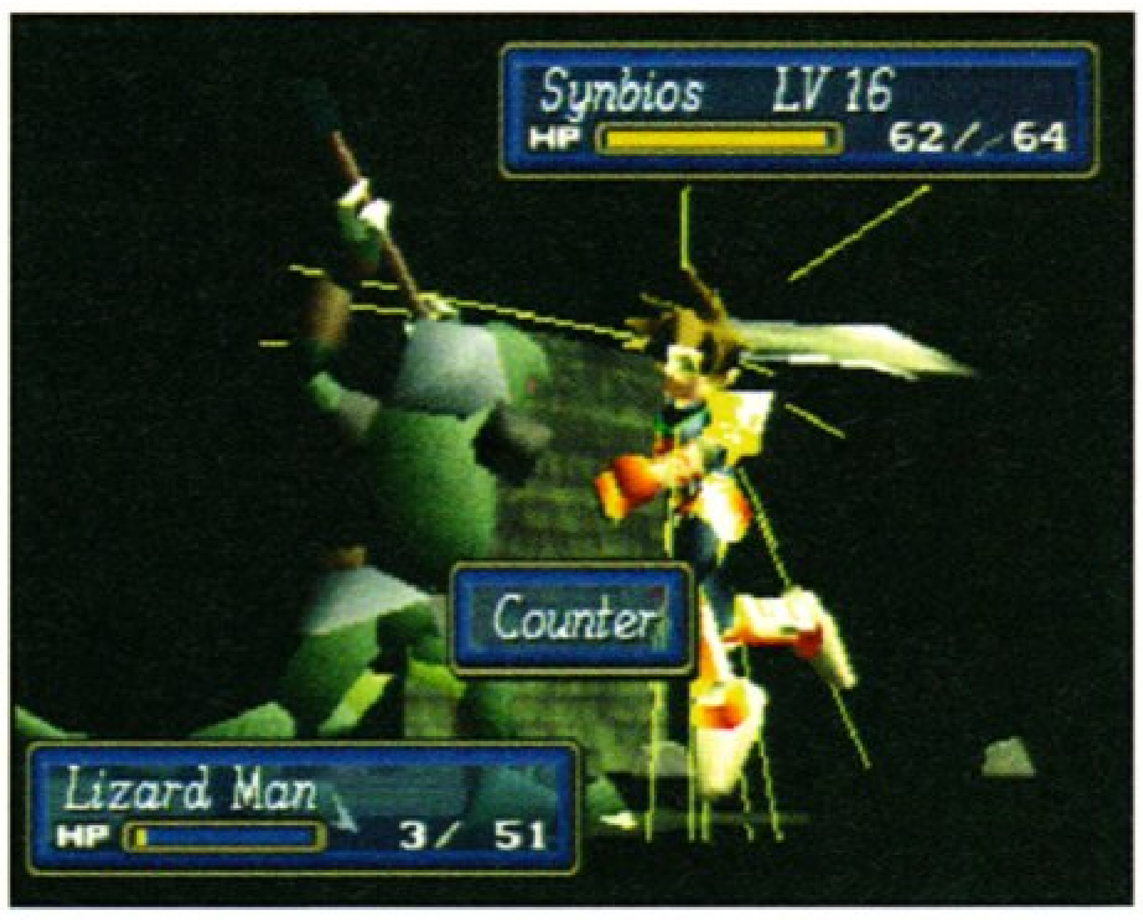
As Gary Glitter would say, Synbios is the 'leeea-der' of the gang and with good reason too - he's the hardest hitter by far. He's also the most upgradable, with at least seven extra swords to be found along the way, each opening new special attacks and magic spells. And his standard specials are damn good too - the Mirage Dance is a particularly fine combination of swordplay and multicoloured visual excellence, while the Twin Shock is a nice little mover too.

MAGIC RATING: PAUL DANIELS
HARDNESS RATING: DIAMOND GEEZER
EARS: NORMAL
OVERALL: 9/10

STANDARD ATTACKS

This is where the fighting experience really starts to pay off, with Synbios having by far the most super-damaging and visually whizzer special attacks. And later on in the game, his defence raises to epic proportions, making him the metaphorical rock in the team. Special swords found along the journey add to his skills too, with Synbios having two of the best magic attacks in the game...





▲ Counters are performed randomly, certain artifacts make them more frequent.







COMBAT TIPS

Be very careful with Synbios toward the end of the game, as several of the bosses have super-bad magic attacks that are capable of draining an entire energy bar in one go - and that's Game Over if they hit Synbios. Use him to pick off secondary baddies, while using more 'expendable' characters to weaken the main enemy commanders.

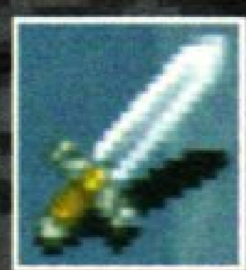


MAGIC ATTACKS

He starts off with no attacking magic (just the basic return-to-the-start trick), but soon learns some awesome stuff later on, thanks to magical swords found and new gear bought from village shops. Pictured here is the amazing Phoenix attack (you need to find the Phoenix Sword first) and also the standard Spark lightning assault, that actually homes in on enemies once it reaches level three.

WEAPONS

Synbios is easily the most upgradable character, with swords bought from shops and weapons dropped by bosses being his main source of combat gear. The Phoenix Sword has one of the most incredible magic attacks in the whole game!


GREAT SWORD


PHOTON BLADE


BROAD SWORD


SHIVA SWORD


PHOENIX SWORD


VENOM BLADE


COUNTER SWORD





OBRIGHT



Porky warrior Obright joins the team very early on in the journey, and is about the third toughest fighter on the team, thanks to his significant bulk and heavy armour. He also has a beard, which is always handy for striking fear into people, while his hard-hitting axe-wielding style makes him an impressive fighter.

MAGIC RATING: DEBBIE MCGEE
HARDNESS RATING: NAILS
EARS? DISAPPOINTINGLY SMALL
OVERALL: 8/10

COMBAT TIPS

Keep him up front to bludgeon his way through enemy lines. It takes him an awfully long time to learn his specials, but the excellent Earthquake attack with its cool shockwave effect is well worth the wait. Equip him with a throwing axe to increase his attack range, but leave him using a decent short range mace for an excellent mobile brick toilet-type warrior.

WEAPONS

Axes and Maces are his baddie-thumping weapons of choice, with the Power Axe also giving him a pretty tasty long range attack too. Basically, just give him anything short and blunt, then wind him up and set him off in the enemy's direction to achieve the best results.



HAND AXE



POWER AXE



MAUL MACE



GREAT AXE



REVENGE MACE

STANDARD ATTACKS

Obright starts off pretty tough and just gets tougher, with damaging moves like the Earthquake and Power Crush beating seven shades of sh... sugar out of most opponents. It takes him ages to learn his specials, but once he's had a few extra lessons at the special school, he becomes a major player in battle sequences.

MAGIC ATTACKS

None. When the other characters were at magic school learning all those cool attacks, Obright was skiving off down at the 24-hour garage nicking sweets and pies - hence his impressive warrior-like girth and lack of magic skills. Oh, what could've been... learn from Obright's mistakes, kids.







OOH... GET A LOAD OF HER!

It's got some of the best special effects we've ever seen the Saturn produce, and Shining Force III also manages to achieve another gaming first - the first ever co-habiting gay couple to appear in a videogame! They appear twice during the game, although they do seem to have separate beds in their *oh-so-cute* little maisonette apartment. "What would you like in your sandwiches, deary?" "Ooh... I fancy a nice meat filling today! Aahh-ha-haaa! Get you!" "No, get you! I want to get something hot inside me! Ooh!" Etc...





MASQUIRIN



She starts off really weak, easily killed with one blow by most baddies. However, use her magic and normal attacks regularly to evolve her into one of the best all-round characters in the game. Her magic attacks are her strength, as she quickly learns the full complement of four magic spells, including the team-mate-helping Support and Attack spells, which boost the abilities of her friends and makes her very popular at fighting parties.

Magic Rating: Houdini
Hardness Rating: Firm
Ears: Large   Overall: 8/10







STANDARD ATTACKS

Her gorgeous Judgment special attack is likely to leave epileptic gamers in a frothing, tongue-biting heap on the floor, but the rest of us can just marvel at the awesome strobe-like magical loveliness. Once promoted to Wizard level her skills leap again, with Masquirin easily having the most visually awesome attacks in the game. Look!

MAGIC ATTACKS

The chunky babe conjurer really excels herself here, with the full range of attacks easily learned and used. Try kitting her out with new staffs bought in village shops too, as these often raise her strength and allow her to use even tougher magic spells.

WEAPONS

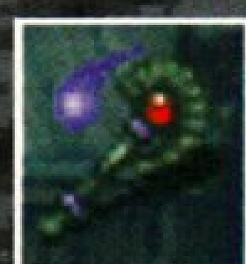
Like Synbios, several of the staffs and wands allow specific attacks and magic spells to be performed, so shop around and keep searching for new gear with new abilities. Also, many of the weapons offer a trade off between standard hit points and magic attacks. See Grace's profile for a more complete list.



Misty Ankh



Torture Rod



Soul Rod

COMBAT TIPS

Her wide range of special attacks make her a surprisingly tough standard hitter, but it's her multi-hit magic skills which you'll be using the most. Make sure you use her a lot too, as the extra experience really maxes up her already-quite-good magic skills. She also learns the Support and Defence skills, which are used to enhance the performance of her colleagues. A real team player and tough for a girl.





GRACE



Another puny magic-based character, Grace is best kept out of proper action toward the rear of the team, only being manoeuvred in to use her healing and antidote skills. She does have a few impressive special moves, and can also learn how to use a couple of low-level attacking spells, but she's pretty weak and should only be used as a last resort attacker.

Magic Rating: Houdini
Hardness Rating: Warm Plasticine
Ears: Gigantic!
Overall: 5/10

STANDARD ATTACKS

She's harder than you'd expect, but that's only because you expect her to be so rubbish. The Nine Gate does a surprisingly large amount of damage though, and the Double Palm can finish off some opponents, but she's in trouble if she only performs a weedy regular one-hit move.











MAGIC ATTACKS

Masquirin has all of the attacking spells, while Grace takes care of the healing stuff. She's very much a people person, with her Healing spell, Antidote action (curing poisoned and paralysed fighters) and the Aura multi-healing spell, while the odd offensive attack like the Tornado and Soul Steal give her a little bit of extra clout towards the end.



COMBAT TIPS

If combat skills were related to ear size, Grace would be the mightiest warrior who ever walked the Earth. Sadly for the horse-like Grace, big ears just mean that you have to sleep on your back and can hear things really far away. As such, Grace is a puny rear-guard fighter only. Like Kahn, she's handy to have around, especially when she learns the Aura spell, which can return three or four characters to health at once.



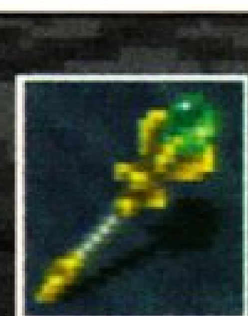
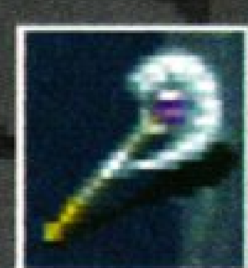
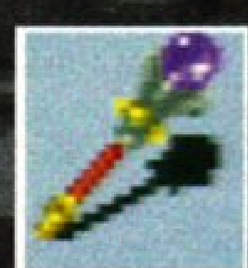
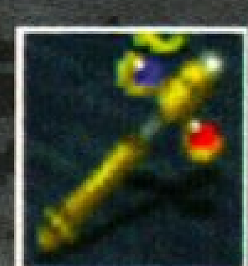
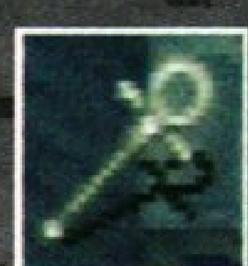
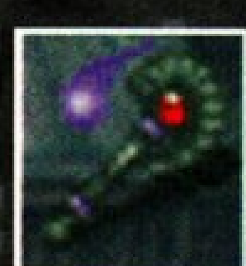
▲ Grace: the Florence Nightingale of videogames.



▲ That's the great thing about these magic-based characters - they have the most incredible special effects.

WEAPONS

Just like Masquirin, Grace can only be equipped with wands and staffs. She does learn a huge range of spells during the game, but thanks to the fact that players are limited to only carrying one weapon and having a maximum of four magic attacks in their arsenal, weapon selection is important here. Do you want a sole healer, or someone who can attack too? It's usually best to kit her out with one attacking spell... just in case.

 Bronze Rod
 Magic Wand
 Saint Ankh
 Talisma n Rod
 Angel Wand
 Misty Ankh
 Torture Rod
 Power Ankh
 Soul Rod

HAYWARD



Possesses the finest pair of ears in the whole game! Ears which he likes to keep out of trouble, thanks to his love of long range bow attacks. He's another character who starts off being really puny when he joins the team, but Hayward is a pretty quick learner with his strategically useful distant attacks adding a cool extra level to the fighting.

MAGIC RATING: DEBBIE MCGEE
HARDNESS RATING: SEASONED OAK
EARS: SPECTACULAR!
OVERALL: 7/10



MAGIC ATTACKS

None. He probably went with Obright to the garage, distracting the shop assistant while Obright stuffed his pockets with Curly Wurlys. Maybe he was too scared to leave the house for fear of people laughing at his ears. Anyway, he knows no magic.







STANDARD ATTACKS

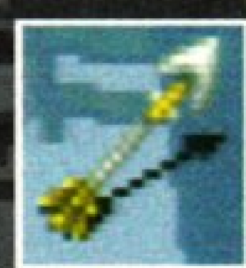
He's got some good specials, but most of them make the screen go a bit funny and bright so they're hard to take shots of. Still, these ones look pretty good anyway! The Mesmer Arrow is the one which fires the laser beams, and although he's not the hardest-hitting character in the game AND he lacks any magic attacks, he's still pretty useful to have around in the second half of the game when he's toughened up a bit.

COMBAT TIPS

When another character is going head-to-head with an enemy, or when it's not possible to move any further forward, Hayward can be positioned behind your other team members to provide a useful second line of attack, firing through the crowds. He can also fire up to higher areas of ground, enabling him to take out enemies who are unable to strike back.

WEAPONS

Long Bows, Short Bows, Cross Bows... there are a surprisingly high amount of extra weapons for Hayward to use, but be careful - most consist of a trade off between range and power, so once again, he's the kind of character that can be tinkered with until he's got the weapon that suits your game plan. He packs a decent punch when equipped with a top-spec bow.



KING'S BOW



ARBALEST BOW



ELVEN BOW



▲ The Minotaur probably thinks he's hard, but Hayward's excellent Ice Arrow will hurt...



▲ Several of the enemies have paralysis attacks - these are cured by the Antidote herb.

KAHN



Hey, hey, it's the monky! This God-bothering Elbesem monk joins the team about one third of the way through the game, quickly becoming an essential member thanks to his wielding of the sacred Elbesem Orb, which weakens the magic power of some opponents. He's not particularly tough though, but his additional healing powers make him half useful.

MAGIC RATING: DAVID COPPERFIELD
HARDNESS RATING: JELLY
EARS: WEARS EAR-COVERING HAT. PROBABLY BIG.
OVERALL: 4/10



▲ Ah... yet another awesome magic effect. Have you seen anything that looks this good before? No, didn't think so.



COMBAT TIPS

He's such a big girl's blouse, that even the puniest of enemies will probably pack him off to meet his Elbesem maker with the first punch. Still, he does get better, and is always worth reviving for the next battle, as the health-boosting magic spell is always a welcome addition to the team. Keep him way out of trouble at the back, only bringing him into action when some healing magic is needed. Keep him well stocked with healing potions too.

MAGIC ATTACKS

So that's why Kahn has come along for the ride. He comes ready-packed with the useful Healing spell, and can be equipped with a decent few power gloves to further boost his rather puny status.



STANDARD ATTACKS

Am I missing something here? Did that last attack really only cause one measly point of damage? Jeez, you'd better start pulling your weight round here Kahn my son, or else we'll have to start docking your wages mate. Still, at least the Elbesem Orb attack looks damn good, and later special attacks like the Jewel Fist and Brutal Shock do a little bit more damage, but he's still not the kind of guy you want leading an attack.

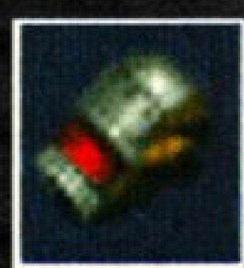




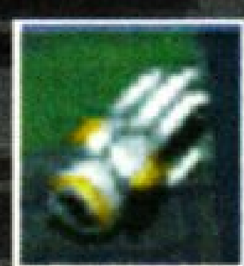


WEAPONS

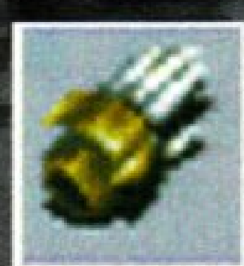
He doesn't carry a traditional weapon as such, instead relying on power-channelling gloves. There's a wide range available, but most only affect his ability to counter and defend, with poor Kahn having probably the weakest range of attacks in the game.

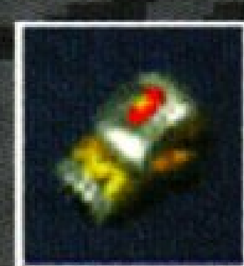

MAGNA GLOVE


STEEL GLOVE


MITHRIL CLAW


STEEL CESTUS


BATTLE CLAW


PRETTY GLOVE

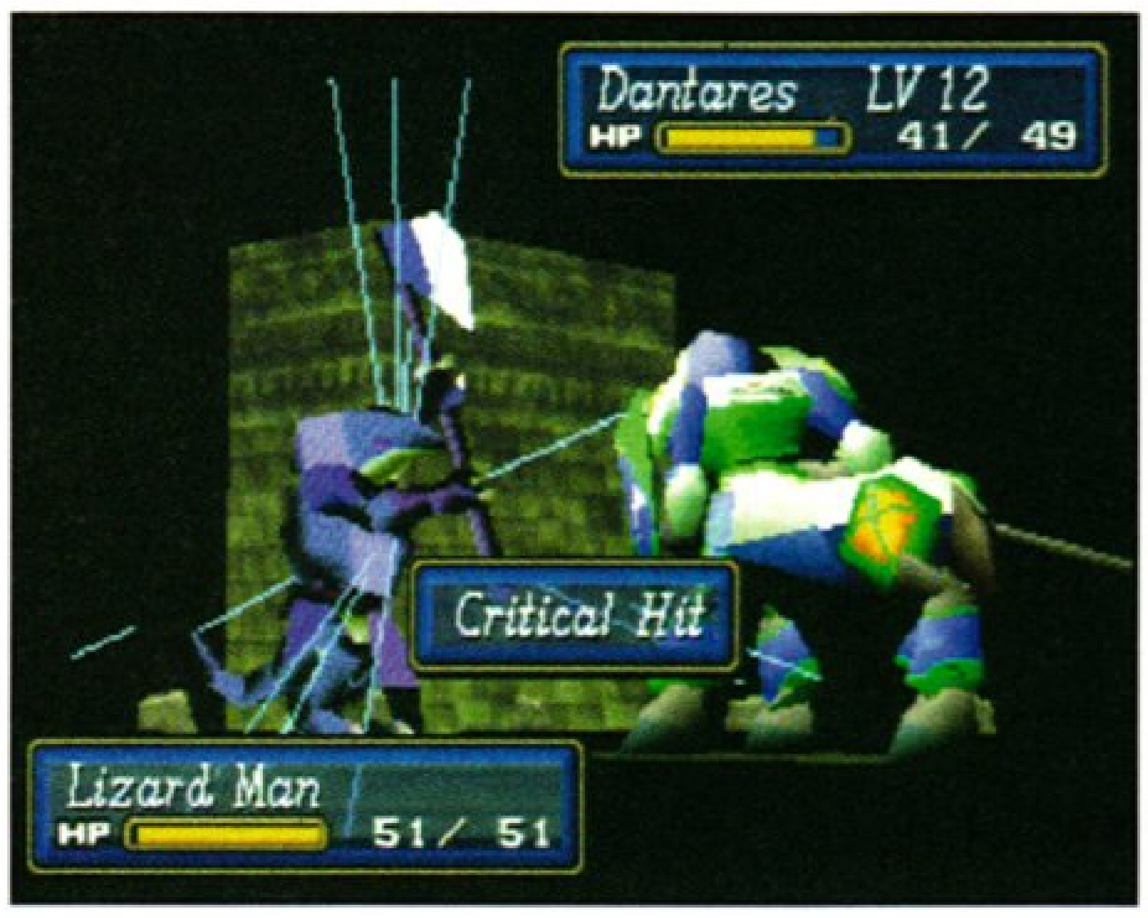


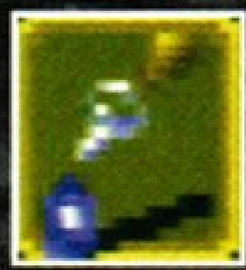
▲ That's the normal Healing spell, one of the few good things about the poor, wimpy magician they call Kahn.



THE BAD GUYS!

And what's an RPG without enemies? Very dull, that's what. And rather pointless too. Fortunately, SFIII is jam-packed with incredible baddie action, with some of 'em having even more impressive attacks than the main characters! There are way too many to cover them all (like *way* too many), so here's a quick look at the most common and most impressive baddies you encounter:

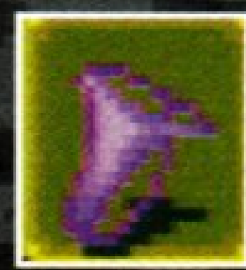



HEALING DROP - REGAIN 30 HIT POINTS


HAPPY COOKIE - RAISES LUCK

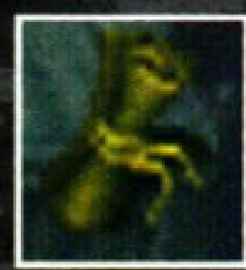

HEALING RAIN - REGAIN ALL HIT POINTS


MITHRIL - CAN BE FORGED BY A SMITHY

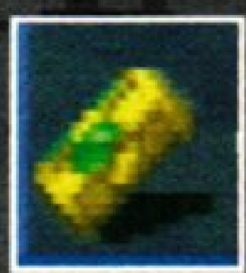

POWER UNDIES - MORE SERIOUS(!)

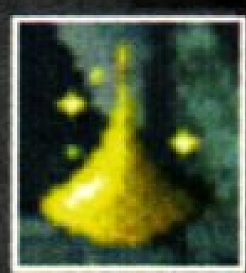

IRON BRACER - RAISES DEFENCE


ANTIDOTE HERB - ANTIDOTE

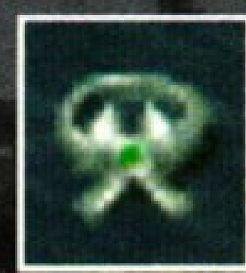

MAPS - CAN BE SOLD


ANGEL'S WING - RETURNS TO LAST CHURCH


STEEL BRACER - RAISES DEFENCE


FAIRY DUST - LEVEL TWO ANTIDOTE


BRAIN FOOD - RAISES MAGIC POINTS


RINGS - VARIOUS UPGRADES

EVEN MORE STUFF!

So, we've had the characters and the bad guys, so that only leaves the 'stuff' that's so important to utilise along your journey! There are loads more items to find, with finding new stuff being one of the most rewarding parts of the game. Here's what we've discovered so far:

CERBERUS

Bad boy! Naughty doggy! This two-headed hound of Satan has a pretty nasty bite, but it's the super-damaging Acid Breath attack that does the most damage. Barbera Woodhouse would have her work cut out with this one. If she was still alive, that is.



SORCERER

These things are trouble. Their magic attacks have a massive range, and they're multiple-hit puppies too. They tend to appear alongside enemy commanders, protecting them with their magic - try to avoid standing in groups, to deny them the pleasure of a multiple-hit attack.



HARPY

Nasty, very nasty. One of their moves is the Panic attack, which can leave the victim in a confused state where they actually lose their bearings and start attacking their own teammates! If a Harpy attack hits a powerful character like Synbios, it's quite possible that he might kill one of his own team on his next turn! Take these out as quickly as possible, no messing about, or you may end up dying by your own sword! Not a warrior's death.



MASKED MONK (A)

These monks appear in various forms throughout the game, with the more vicious ones sporting the level three Blaze attack! Which isn't quite so nice when it's being used against you. They have a long attacking range too, but luckily they're among the weakest of the enemies you'll face, so a quick double-team attack from a couple of your team should do 'em.

A



B



HYDRA (B)

These mutant snake things start to appear about half way through the game, sporting a three-hit bite attack (one bite per head!) and also a very nasty acid attack. Fortunately, they're not keen on moving too far, so it's actually a good tactic to try and avoid them all together.

SPIRIEL

Traitorous babe commander Spiriel is a kind of mid-level boss, as she stands between you and a confrontation with mad monk sympathiser Basanda. Her pre-attack taunt is a rather short and to the point: "I'm going to kill you." The thing is, she's probably right. Spiriel's heavily armoured, but luckily very prone to magic attacks - you know what to do - let 'er 'ave it!



▲ Mmm... I like the metallic armour fetish gear, babe!

NEXT MONTH

Holy guacamole! You think that lot looks good? Wait 'til next month, when we'll be showcasing the game's mega-tough final bosses, along with their astounding attacks, including Basanda's AWESOME Tantares lightning stormer and the rock-hard, laser-gobbing monolith that is the Holy Warrior. We'll also cover the rest of the team, including Dantares, Justin, Julian and the other puny losers like Cybel and Elder. Enjoy the game... see you next month!





Riven

Are you stuck yet? One of the biggest and most challenging game 'experiences' has arrived on the Saturn, leaving a trail of confused, frightened and lost players behind it. GARY CUTLACK guides you gently by the hand through the dangerous world of Riven...

TEMPLE ISLAND

So here we go then. Getting out of the jail shouldn't be too much of a problem, so now is a good time to read the book you're carrying to fill in a bit of the background detail. The first machine you see is actually a telescope - don't waste time here as it can't be used... yet.




The telescope appears again right at the end of the game...



The first puzzle... and already head-scratchingly tough.

THE GATE ROOM

Otherwise know as the Rotating Room - the first puzzle. Press the knob four times, which rotates the room into the right position. Now go back, turn left and pop down to the locked gate by the cliff. Can't get through? Examine it a bit more carefully - you can actually crawl underneath! Now you can access the Gate Room and cross it to a smaller cave. Move the lever into a horizontal position (this channels the island's steam-power to the telescope).



Turn around and press the door button twice, then push the lever on the left up - this opens another gate. Go across to this entrance, sneak through, turn around and push the lever on the left, then press the button on the right twice again - this opens the hilltop entrance. Leave through here, turn around and press the knob on the right twice. Now you can walk right through the Gate Room to the Gold Sphere!




(Left) Sneak under the door to access another Gate Room door.

THE GOLD SPHERE

This place is a central power source, distributing power to the five Riven islands. Take the walkway outside. Turn the lever near the escaping steam to the left - this provides power to the bridge. Follow the path some more and turn the next lever. Don't worry about other things... we'll get to them later!



Pause to admire the great views every now and again!




The Gold Sphere has two higher exits, just to confuse you!

THE NEXT TWO ROOMS

Now walk back through the Gold Sphere and the Gate Room and continue across the bridge opposite the hillside entrance. Explore these two rooms - the equipment can't be used yet, but make sure you press the door-opening lever by the porthole. Exit this room, and walk through the second room (and the door you've just opened) out to the Mag-lev (Magnetic Levitation Vehicle). Press the blue button to summon the futuristic chariot, get in, press the left button to rotate it and push forward the power lever.



The lever opens the door to this strange temple-like room.

JUNGLE ISLAND

Enjoy the ride? Good. Turn to the right and go up the staircase. Where the road splits into three tracks, take the middle path (we'll come back to the others). Continue along, then take the left-hand path when the track splits again.

Go through the gate and take the path to the right once you enter the village, carrying on until you reach the stone buildings. Climb the ladders (knock at the locked door five times to annoy the resident!), then, when at the top of the cliff, pull the lever to lower the vehicle into the water - you need this later on!




It's easy to get here, but solving the puzzles is another matter.





THE BEACH

Now go back to the stone staircase and go down the steps to the beach. See the animals? Local beasts known as Sunners! Explore the beach, then follow the stone path around to the wooden walkway and climb the ladder at the end. Climb down the next ladder, and the next one, then hey-presto! - you're in the submarine.



Run down these steps to scare off the sunners...





Back, forward, left, right - it's all go, isn't it?

SUBMARINE RIDES

There are three levers in the sub - the far-right one controls the power, the left-to-right switch lets you choose direction at the junctions and the middle lever





The sub stops at various air pockets that let you climb out.

rotates the sub 180 degrees. First of all, you need to switch the positions of the ladders so they can be reached by the sub. Turn the sub around and head off to the first junction (the sub stops when it reaches a junction). Make sure the direction lever is to the right, then engage power to continue.



THE CONTROL ROOM

Okay, now look up, open the hatch and climb up the metal rungs in the cliff. Flip all of the levers to the 'up' position - this repositions the village ladders so they may be reached from the air pockets where the sub stops. Go back to your sub-aqua vehicular friend, swivel it around and head back. Turn left at the next junction you encounter to reach...

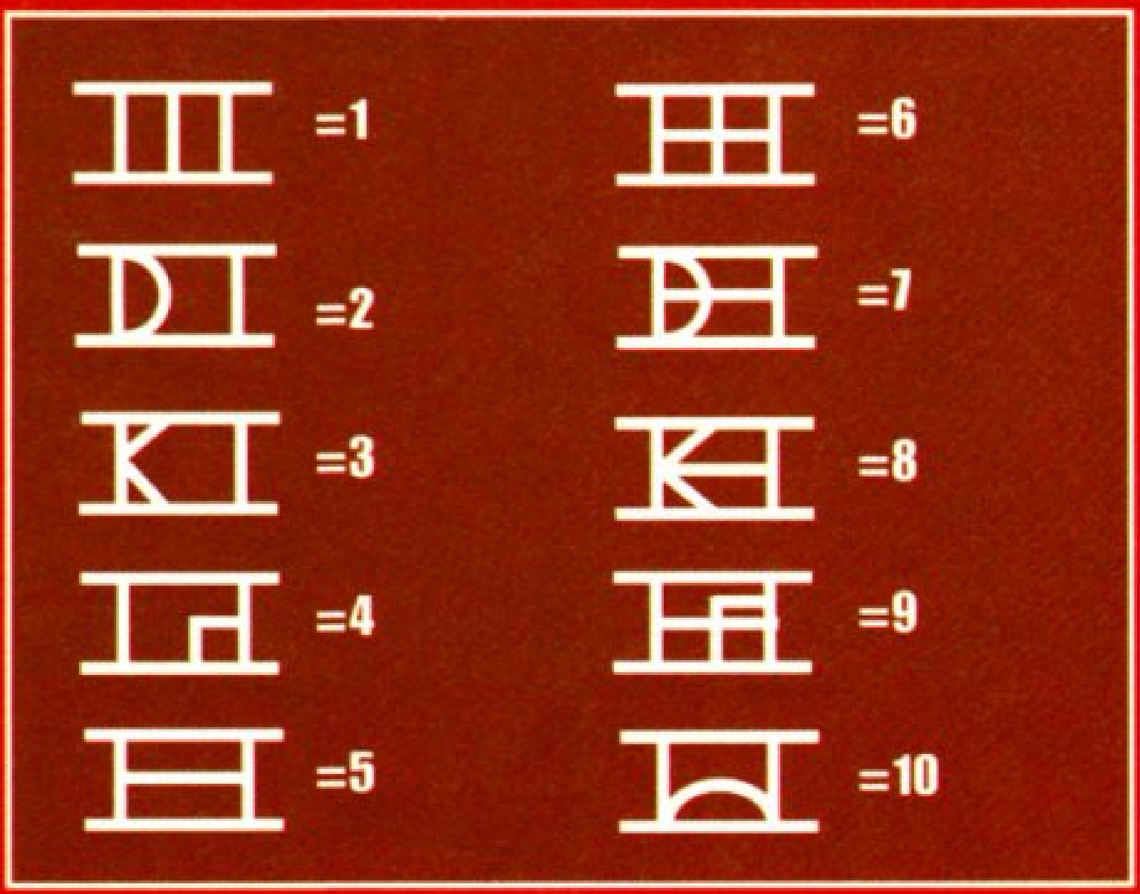




That's Gehn's face that appears when you crank the lever.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE

What a lovely building! Can you work out what that machine on the desk is? It's an educational counting machine. Hit the switch and watch how many notches the wooden men fall - the symbol on the base represents the number.





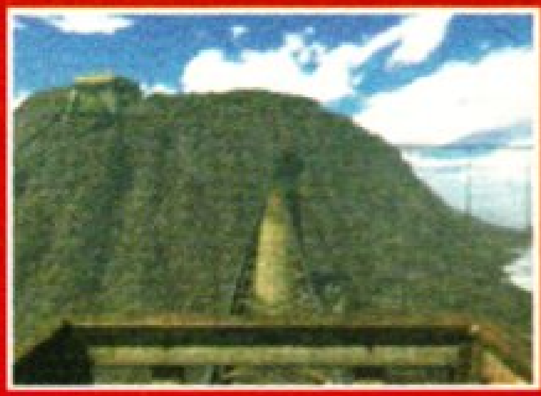


(Left) The school's counting machine comes in dead handy.

>> So now you've learned how to count in D'ni numbers! That'll come in handy later on... There's not much else to do here, so head back to the sub, swivel it around and head forward. Take the left junction, ignore the next stop (again, we'll do that one later) and continue forward. Then take a right at the next junction. Climb out - you're back at the dock. Turn right, walk back through to the cave and go right through. Then take a left through the gate, turn right at the fork and head out to the open wood-cutting area. From here take the left path and drop into the mine cart - Riven's mine cart level is go!

BOOK ASSEMBLY ISLAND

Now you're at the boiler - Gehn's private power generator. To exit from this area you need to sneak through the boiler pipes up to the top of the cliff.

Enjoy the ride? It gets a lot tougher from now on, trust me.

THE BOILER

The unit in the middle of the lake diverts power between various parts of the islands. Switch it to the 5 o'clock position so it powers the building on the beach. Go back to the boiler, up the stairs and turn left to head toward the array of switches and levers. The plan here is to raise the floor in the boiler, then drain the water out so you can sneak into the pipe.

The first lever switches between two parallel pipes - move it down so it points to the nearest pipe. Now turn right to face the rest of the controls and move the horizontal lever on the right so it's pointing upwards. This deactivates the boiler. Now raise the handle to the right of the window (this raises the boiler's floor), turn back to face left and divert power back to the furthest pipe. Now turn back to face the main control area and turn the big wheel to drain the boiler - voila!



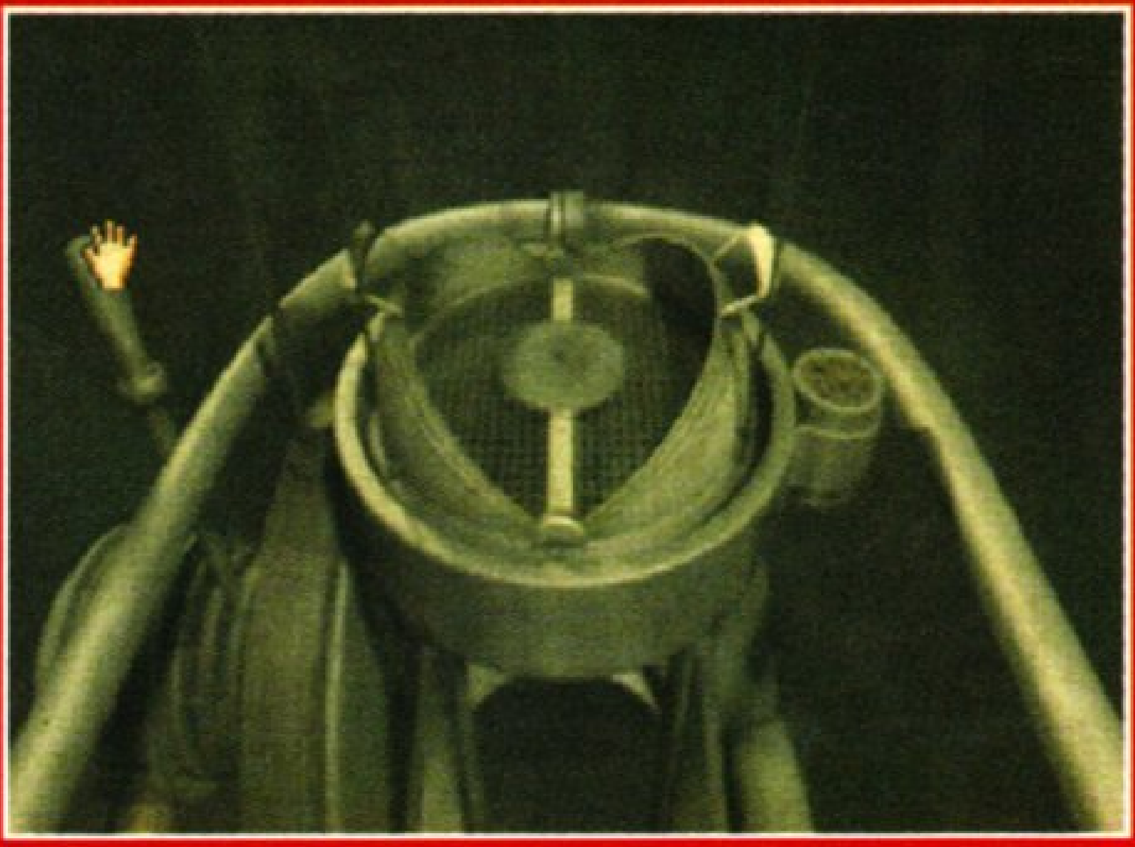
The Rivenese are yet to experience they joys of the nuclear age. They don't appear to have televisions either...




Grasp that lever! Pull it! PULL IT ! Oh yeah, that feels good...

INSIDE THE CLIFF

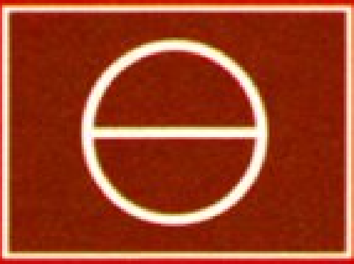
Now go back to the door of the boiler, enter and pop down the pipe in the middle. Follow the tunnel to the end - and daylight! Now follow the path around to the left, climb over the railing and open the hatch in the floor (don't go through it - it comes in handy later). Go through the double doors and play with the contraption at the end - it's a rodent trap! Play with this for a while... then get stuck at the first tough part of the game.



Put some bait in the trap and pull the lever to set it.

DOORS AND DOMES

Can't see where to go now, eh? Well, stay in the trap tunnel and turn around - see the way the doors are still open? Close them to reveal two passageways hidden by the open doors! Take the left passage and head down towards the dome. Close the Dome door to reveal another hidden door - go through this one to enter the viewing room. Look into the viewer - this stops the dome from spinning. Press the top button on the viewer when this round yellow symbol appears:



Yeah, it'll take a few goes, but it eventually stops and opens the spinning dome. It can't be opened yet, so head back up to the trap tunnel and take the right-hand passage (go straight across). Follow the small metal pipe by the side of the track until you find a lever - pull this (it stops the fan above the trap) and head back to the trap tunnel. Now the fan has stopped spinning you can sneak into Gehn's lab!

DOME COMBINATION

This changes each time you play the game. Read the book in Gehn's lab and make a note of the number sequence you see (it's written in D'ni numbers!), now head back to the gold dome and prepare to open that baby up! You have to do some thinking here - what do those new symbols mean? You should see combinations containing new symbols that look a bit like these:



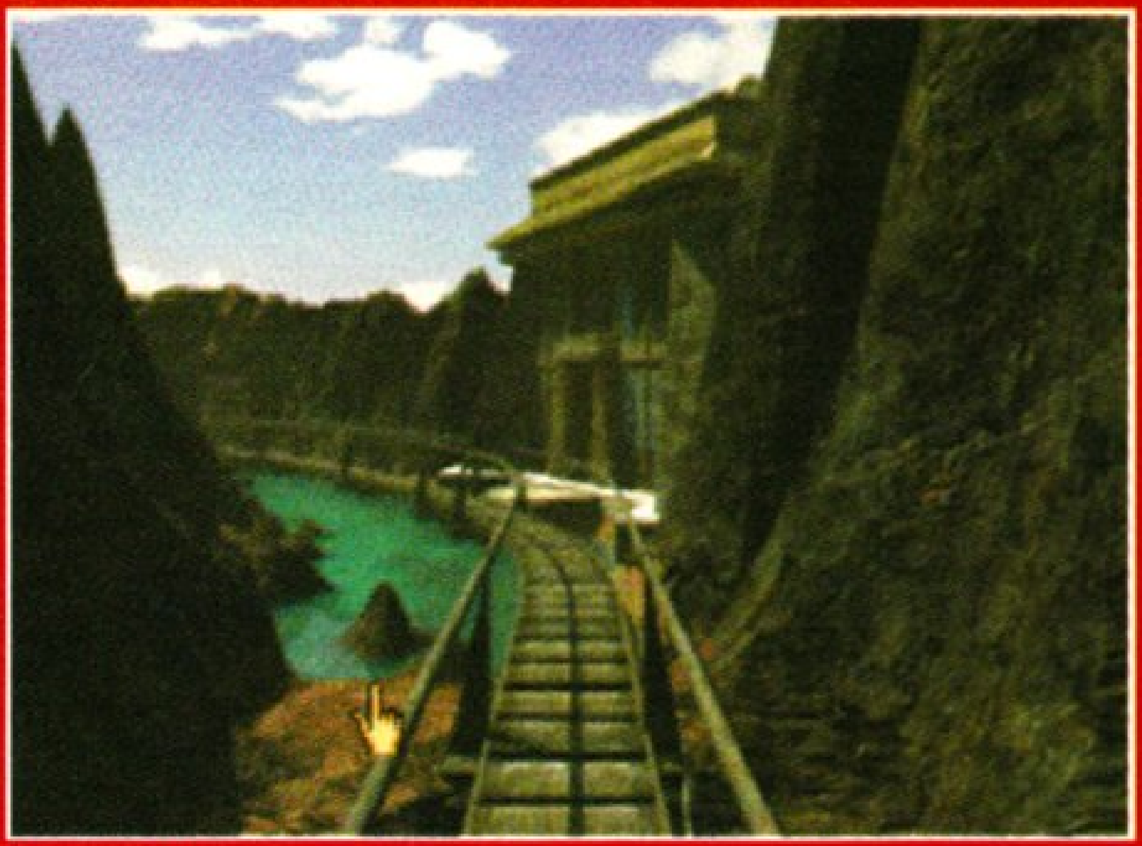
At 15, a V shape appears at the bottom of the square, like a sideways 3 we saw earlier. The symbol for 20 has a small square in the top right corner, which means that a combination of these symbols is needed to work out the exact code for the dome. Opened it? Good, but it's a dead-end for now! Head back to Gehn's lab, open the front door and turn right, heading out towards the big Gold Sphere.

BACK AT THE GOLD SPHERE

If you've been following this guide, the power should be diverted to allow you to lower the bridge and enter this Gold Sphere. Follow the catwalk around to the end and move the big handle to extend the rest of the walkway. Now turn around and go through the exit



A nice piece of hi-res artwork from the PC version. Both games play exactly the same, which is handy if you have a PC guide book...



Now the front door should be unlocked... easy-peasy!





(Right) Close these doors to reveal two hidden passages

you've just passed - exit here, turn around and push the button on your right - this raises the missing section of the bridge. Turn back around, cross this new section and raise the lever at the end - but don't bother with this yet - there are other things to do first... go back to the sphere, turn left and go down the catwalk steps. There's a switch down here on the right - press it to reveal...

THE SECOND DOME!

Through this underground passage lies another dome, this one stopped again by pressing the button when is flashes on the yellow symbol. The number code to enter this dome is the same as before... but it's another dead-end! Head back to Gehn's lab, press the blue Mag-lev call button and head off to Survey Island!





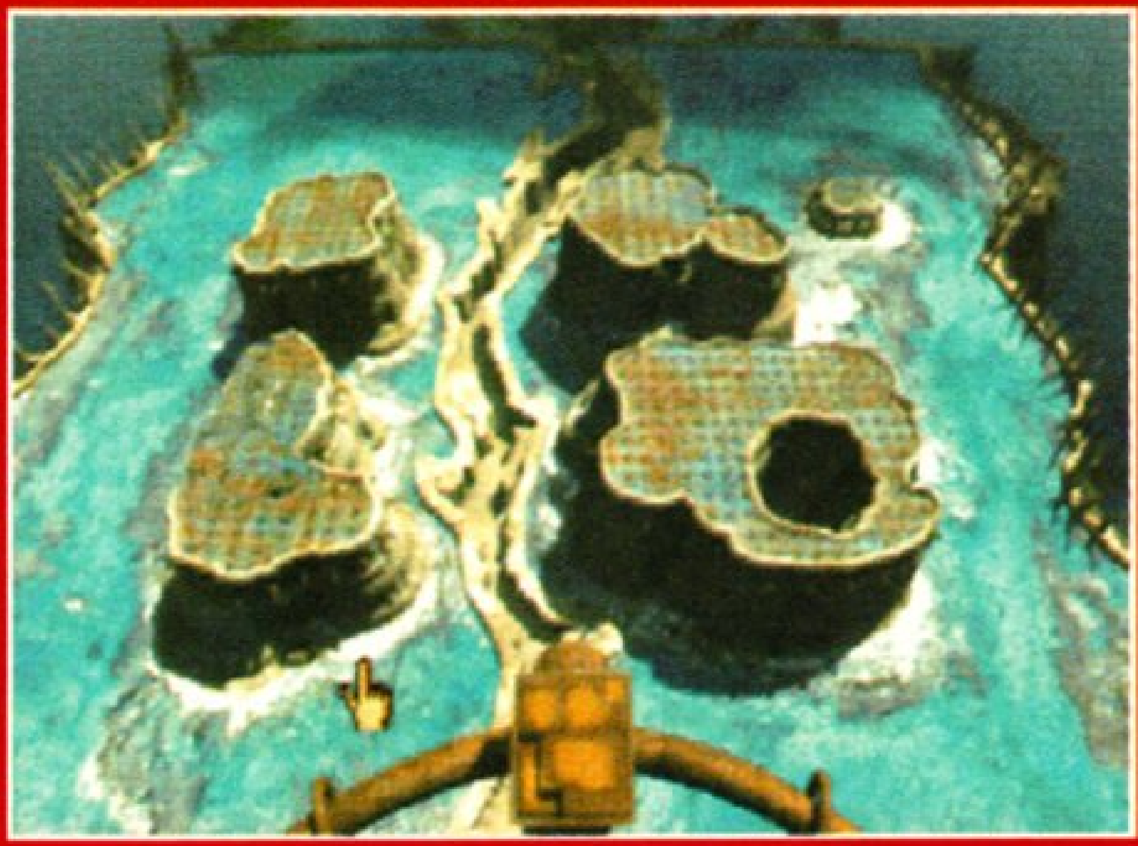
Mmm, that shiny sphere looks better every time I see it...



Return to this dome later, when the power has been activated.

SURVEY ISLAND

Head right across the island, go into the lift and press the hard-to-see button on your left. Now you're on top of an overhang. Walk forward and press the 'L' shaped bottom square on the grid in front of you - this floods the corresponding shaped lump of rock. Now turn around - there's a path going through the elevator section into the other side. The rusty dome is the Map Room - press the little gold square to activate the 3D map. The lever on the left switches between the various Riven islands... pay attention here, as these 3D maps are very important later on...



Remember the shapes of the blocks on that small panel...

ANOTHER DOME!

Leave the Map Room and take the catwalk around to the left. It can be opened just like all the others, but the mechanismon the viewer seems to be a bit knackered so you have to guess when to press the button. There's nothing else to see here yet - head back to the mag-lev, rotate it and get out the other side. Get ready for another educational section...



That's a Wahrk popping in to say hello. Hello Mr Fishy!





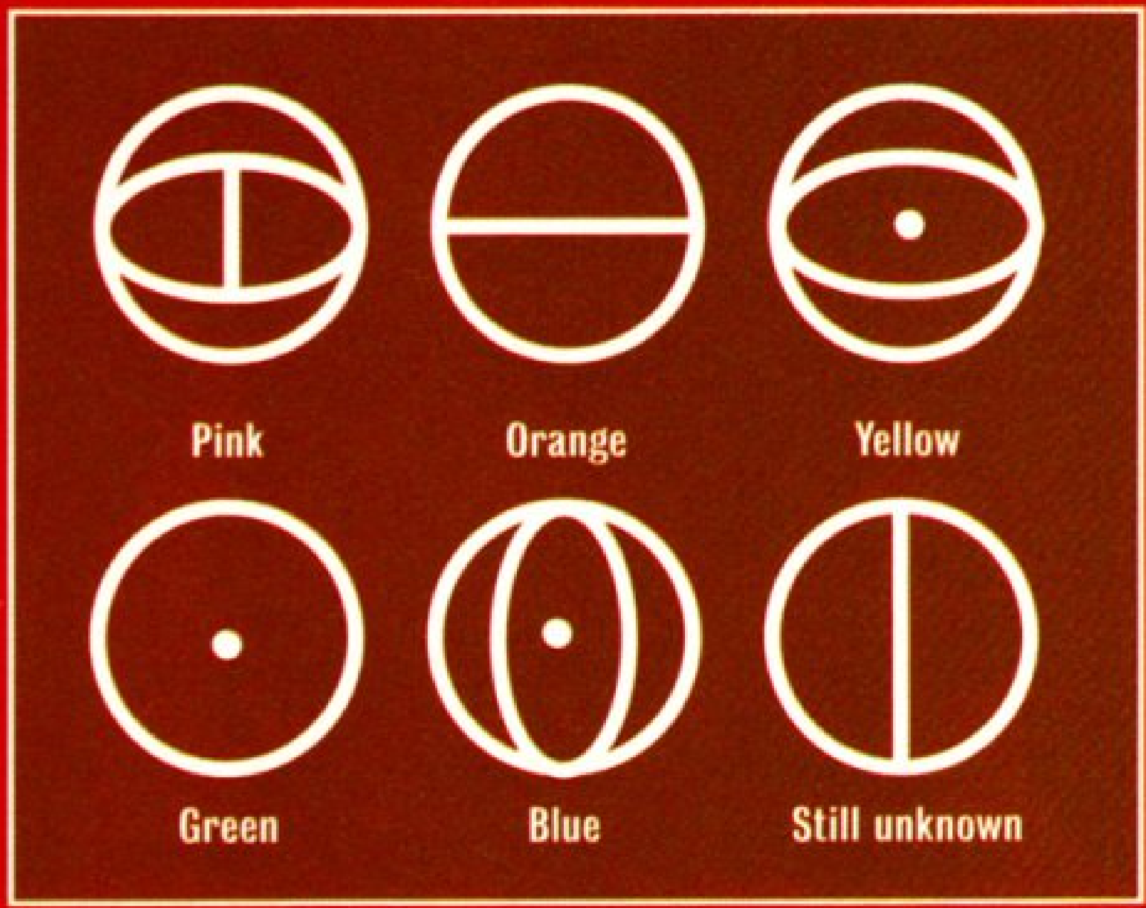
Those rings rotate the viewer. The lumps activate it.

THE THRONE ROOM

Pull the lever on the left - this calls the lift. Go inside and press the button to voyage to the very core of the planet! Not really, we just go down one level, but it's still pretty exciting. Now follow the path straight on (ignore the left-hand exit for now) and you'll be in the educational Throne Room. This is another key section - here you learn the D'ni colour system! Sit yourself in the throne and press the pink button, then pull the right-hand lever to activate the first control panel which lowers itself down in front of you..

COLOURS

Each symbol represents a colour. Use the big rings on the edge of the panel to rotate the dial, then press the symbol when it appears in the red section to see a coloured light. One of them can't be discovered just yet, but that becomes clear a bit later on...



Now remove that panel and lower the left-hand lever to activate a second panel. Press the two square-ish nuts to activate Gehn's spy telescope! After letching the locals, press the pink button to escape from the chair and continue on. Head back down the path and take that right-hand exit. Call the mag-lev and go.

BACK TO JUNGLE ISLAND

Now there's another lift to go in. Move the handle up one notch, pull the lever that appears on the left and walk down the unfolding steps? Look familiar? There's a new switch that's appeared on the left pillar - it opens and closes the dragon's mouth... but it's no use now. Go back into the lift and move the handle up another notch - there's another rotating dome! This one can be stopped too, but it's not essential to do so. Continue up the stairs and cross the bridge to the conical building - enter and pull the left lever. Ooh, nice view! But we're here on business, remember. Press the right lever to re-arrange the floor below, then press the left one again and head back to the village (take the lift back down to the dragons head and follow the left fork).

Now head back to that wooden platform - the sub should be there waiting for you, like a nice, well-trained, obedient little metallic puppy, that can go underwater and... oh never mind. I think Riven is driving me mad. Swivel it around and head off. Carry on past the first point and get out at the next stop. Now you're at the pretty area you just opened from the conical tower. Pull the little triangular handle, then sit on the seat and get yourself winched up to...

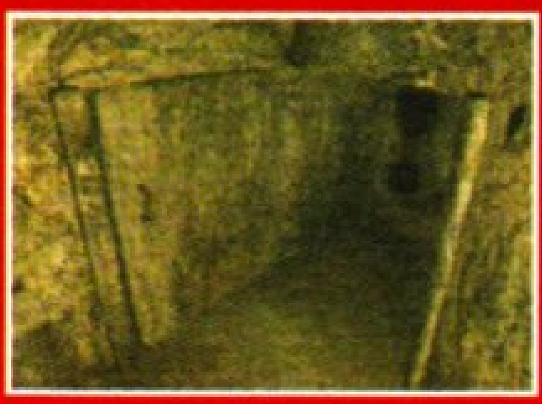


THE PRISON

Wave at the criminal deviant who's locked in his cell (remember that you were also locked up at the start), then turn to the right and press the button that unlocks the bars. Now investigate the grating on the floor - there's a secret lever hidden in the water underneath which opens another secret passage in the wall! Head through this dark tunnel to reveal... absolutely nothing at all!







Unlock the prison door - the prisoner sneaks out before you.

THE DARK TUNNEL

But there is a way out of here. See the little switch to the left-hand side of the tunnel as you face the water? It's actually a light switch. Activating this allows you to see a little further back into the darkness behind you, so turn around and hunt for another light. Turn this one on, find the next switch and so on. Eventually you illuminate a hidden doorway set in the wall on your left. Open it and walk through to the...



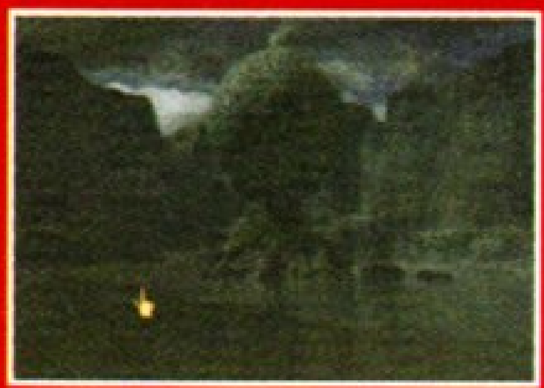


That door swings both ways... which comes in handy.

HARD ANIMAL STONES BIT

This is the hardest part of the game so far. By miles. Five of these stones need to be pressed in the right order to proceed past the dagger stone. But what is the right order? And what are those stupid animal things? Well... have you noticed the wooden balls set into various parts of the islands? They have numbers





(Right) That scary place opens when the puzzle is solved...





written on the back, and one of those did indeed have a dagger planted near it. So it's the numbers and animal noises (!) on these wooden balls that reveal the code sequence.

SOLVING THE STONES

The numbers on the back of the wooden balls (1-5 in D'ni talk) tell you which order to press the stones, while the shape of the surroundings corresponds with the shape of the animal design on the important stones (imagine the wooden ball is the animal's eye, then take a broad look at the area...). Also pay attention to the noise the balls make too...

Okay, so the second stone to press is the one with the Inkbeetle logo on - remember the water flooding the pool and forming a beetle-like shape? Number three is the Ytram, thanks to the shape of the cave as you look out. Number four is the thin seal-like Sunner and number five is the rock-shaped and strangely fish-like Wahrk.



Solve the stones puzzle to open the first working linking book and zap off to a completely new section!





(Left) Don't confuse this stone with the sunner one (right).



This puzzle is an absolute nightmare to work out, thanks to the super-obscure animal-shapes-hidden-in-the-scenery puzzles. Completing this section is very important though, as it allows you to access the linking book.

THE FINAL CODE

And number one? Well, it doesn't seem to have an obvious shape and the solution is pretty obscure. The Wahrks may well make that loud noise, but the fish? Number four sounds more like the Sunners that were lying on the beach earlier on, which gives us this final stone-pressing sequence:

Finally. Now the water barrier in front of you disappears, revealing a draw containing one of Gehn's linking books that Catherine has activated. This is the first linking book that actually works - put your hand on the image to link to a new area!









Once the stones have been pressed in order they stay down.



Work this puzzle out on your own to be considered a legendary gameplaying genius - of immense proportions!

THE MOEITY REBELS

Now this is a scary place. Whatever happens, those two shifty Rivenese blokes are gonna mug you, drag you off (probably by the ears) and lock you in a room. Explore this new place for a bit - a woman called Nelah will eventually appear. She brings two books - Catherine's diary and the prison book. Here you learn a bit more about the story, including the plan to trap Gehn, free Catherine from prison and signal Artrus, and after that, it's back to Temple island to activate the island's power source.

BACK TO TEMPLE

Head back to the original Gold Sphere (go back to Gehn's lab, exit through the front door and turn right). From here the island's power source can now be activated. The exit you need is the second one on the left inside the dome. There's a lever on the right just before the bridge - pull this baby to elevate the bridge up to a higher exit. So now you need to get to the new section of walkway - take the first exit (back and to your right now) and enter the Gate Room by pressing the button on the right until



the door opens. Run across the Gate Room to the other doorway and press the room-rotating knob until the next door opens. Now head for that new door, exit under the locked gate and run up to the other hill-top entrance. Rotate the room again and the next entrance should allow you to cross the room to the newly elevated floor section.

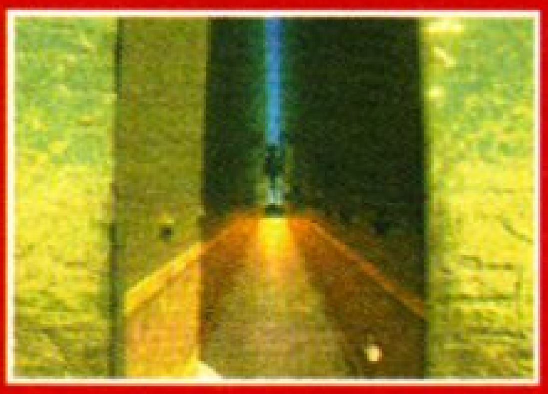
REALLY HARD POWER PUZZLE

This is the power control centre. Remember the curious grid puzzle that appeared way back on the Survey island? Where you could press funny-shaped sections to raise some water down below? Well, the power puzzle is related to that, and also to the 3D landscape map room that was located behind it.

THE EXPLANATION...

Basically, each of the grid shapes represents one of the islands, while the coloured balls represent the locations of the rotating domes. Put the coloured balls into the relevant positions that represent each of the rotating domes on the five islands. By using the 3D map back on Survey island it's possible to work our exactly where the coloured balls need to go in the 5x5 grid, thanks to the



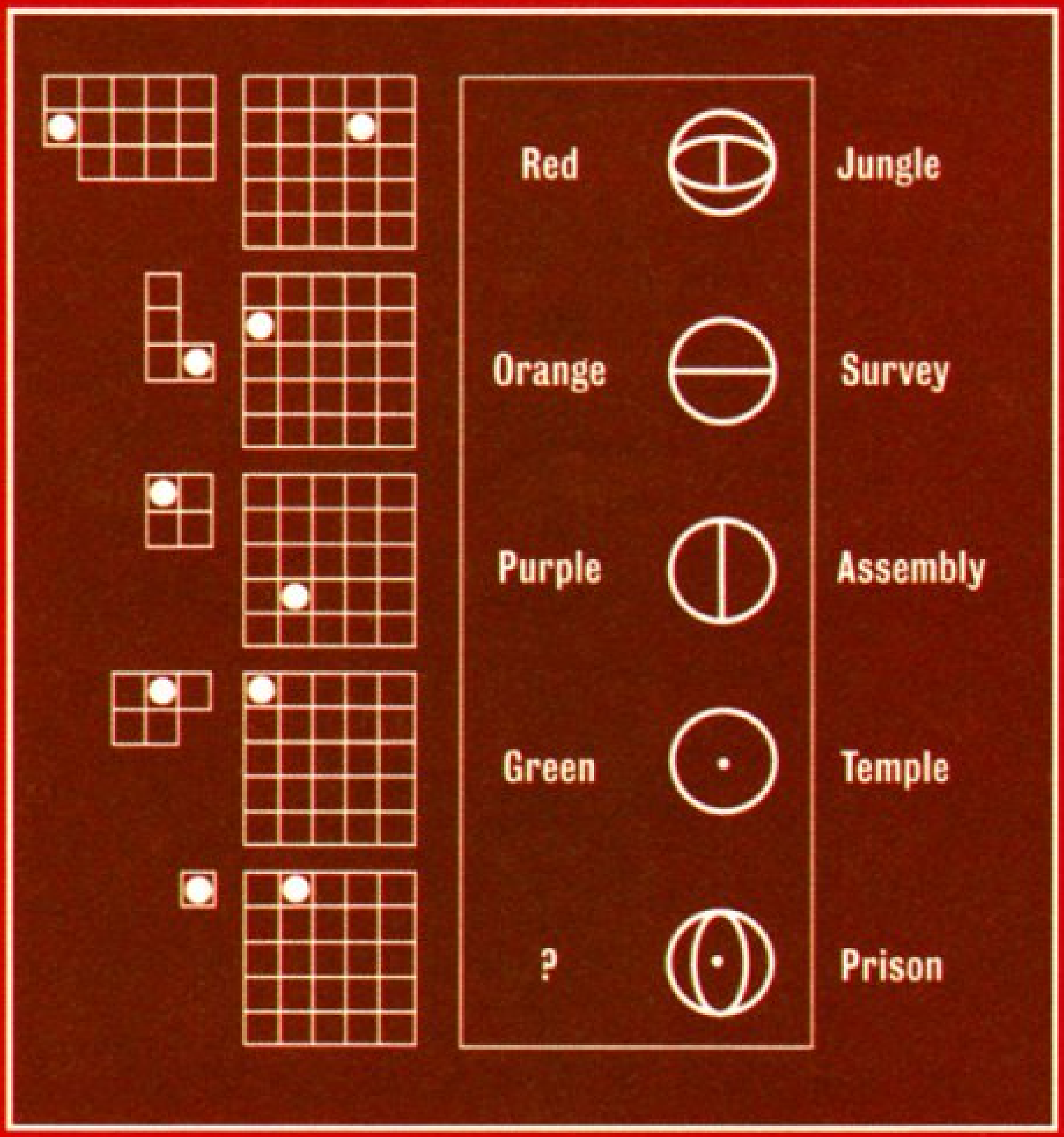


Now you're ready to activate the island's power supply...

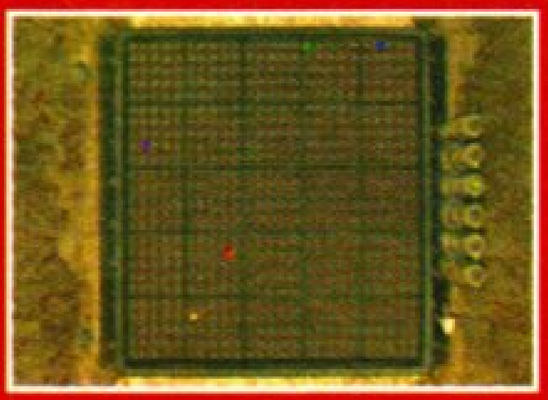
dome's appearance on the 3D maps. The Book Assembly island one is harder to spot, but pay attention to the physical location of the dome - the jagged shaft above is pretty easy to spot on the map.

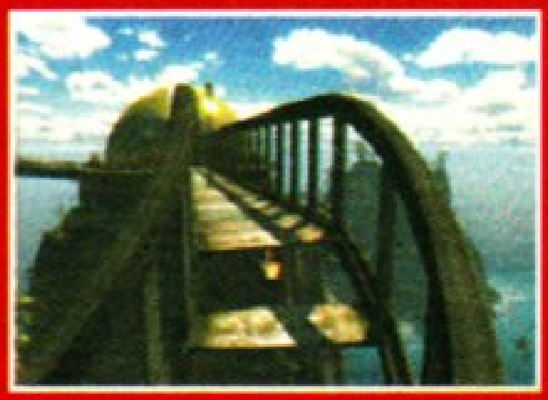
WHICH COLOURS?

So which colour corresponds to each dome? Well, remember the viewers that are used to stop the dome rotating? Each symbol in each viewer represents to correct colour to use... hope you made a note of them! And if you didn't, here's a handy little table to illustrate:



So there is a gap... but as we're yet to explore the fifth island it's safe to assume that the leftover ball





Get your balls in properly, then head back to the link book...

must belong in the small top-right square section. But there are two spare balls - which one fits in? The yellow marble represents the power station itself (shiny yellow ball represents the shiny yellow dome), so leave that one in its initial position at the side and stick the blue ball into the fifth final place.

LINKING!

Turn around and pull the lever on the wall to your left. This will reveal a white button - press this to finally activate the power supply. Of course, this also means that the island's linking books are now activated. Head back to the Gate Room and rotate it until you can get back into the first gold sphere through its second gate. Now go around the back and take the lift down to the Temple island linking book. Enter the same number code you discovered before, open the dome, open the book and link off to another location!

NEXT MONTH!

We continue to push back the frontiers of Human endurance, explaining some of the story behind Catherine, Artrus and Gehn. If you're stuck, don't worry, there's only thirty days "til part two!

GRANDIA

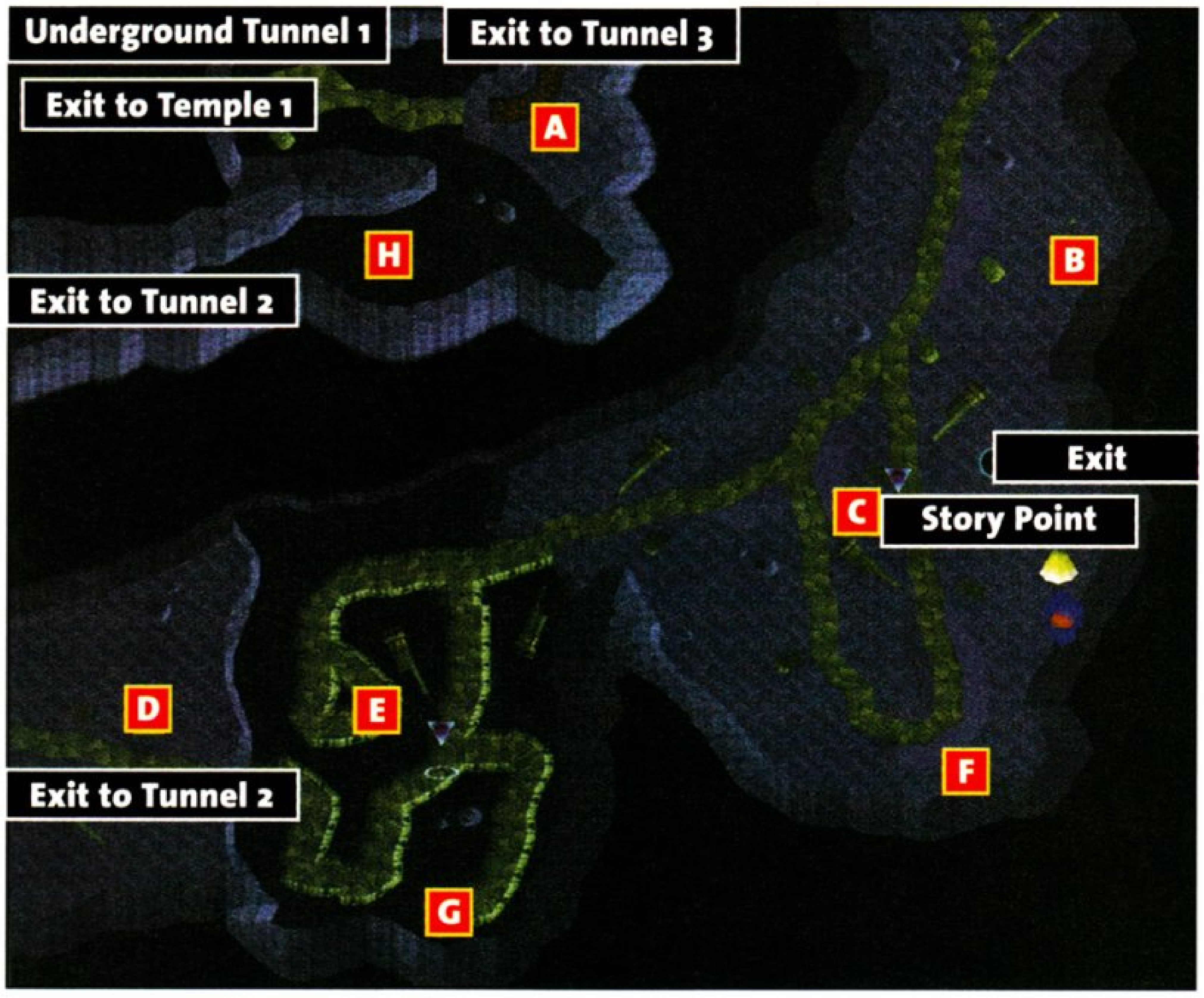
THE WALKTHROUGH PART 4

This is it - the final part of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE's epic Grandia walkthrough. This issue features all the maps you'll need to get to the end of the game, along with a point-by-point breakdown of the last few levels. There are no maps here, but you shouldn't really need them.

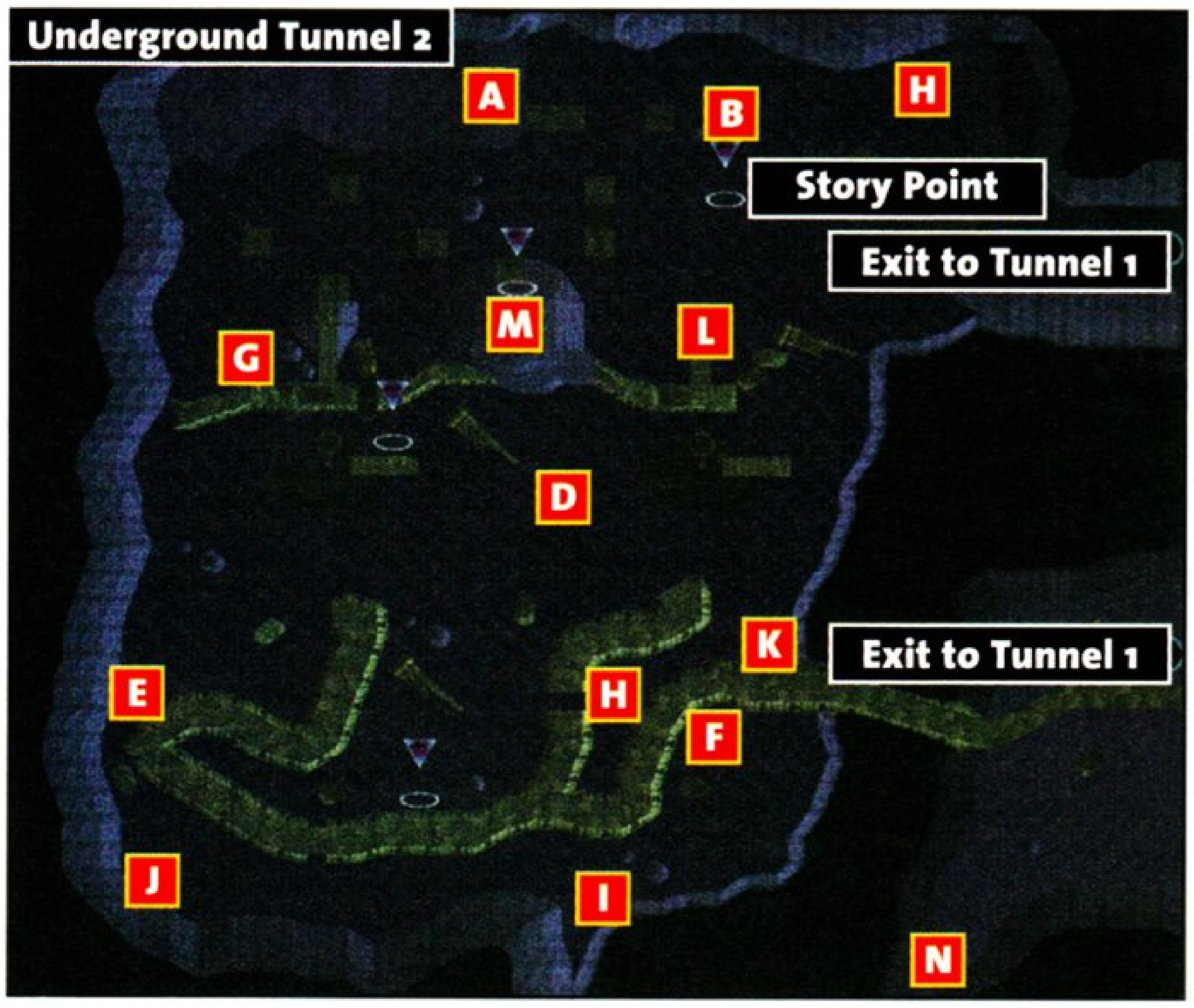
THE UNDERGROUND TUNNELS

After defeating the boss at the end of the Pocket Dimension, don't fail to open up the chest behind the dead creature. It contains the horn you need to give back to one of the cows in Rumi Village, specifically the mayor (the house at the northwest). He gives you a special item which opens up the next area of the game but where is the lock for this key? At this point, Marda stays behind and you need to travel to Jirpadon to pick up a new team member to replace her. Go to the fountain in the centre of town to find the doorway to the next level but it's underwater! You need to find the mayor and turn the water off. Go to the Moge Elder House (point F on last issue's Jirpadon map). It turns out that Gido (whom you met earlier) IS the mayor and he obliges you on the water front and joins the team! Before you head back to the fountain, it's worth saving your game and stocking up on 150HP health potions. Stick a few in the magic chest. The levels ahead are long and arduous and you'll need the stamina. Another good tip is to remember that you can recharge at save points - just select the second option down to get an instant refill. Let me stress this again: STOCK UP ON THE 150HP potions! You're gone for a VERY long time. Buy as many as you can and store those you can't carry.

There appear to be multiple routes at Underground Tunnel 1, after you return from Tunnel 2. From here, go into the Temple. Inside is the first boss. Beat him and you can find the Knowledge Medal on the next stage. Then return to Tunnel 2 for some story exposition, before moving onto Tunnel 3. Here, we advise you save before continuing - you won't make it across unmolested. After a massive earth-quake, you find yourself alone you need to get through the sub-levels with just Justin. This should pose too many problems.



UNDEGROUND TUNNEL 1	
A	270G
B	270G
C	270G
D	270G
E	810G
F	Dimension Shoes
G	Magic Seed
H	Resurrection Herb



UNDERGROUND TUNNEL 2	
A	270G
B	270G
C	270G
D	270G
E	270G
F	270G
G	270G
H	810G
I	810G
J	Lightning Charm
K	Strength Seed
L	Resistance Seed
M	Muno Gushyu
N	Miracle Drink



Get the foutain drained off, then proceed into the tunnels!



UNDERGROUND TEMPLE 2

A 270G
B 270G
C Knowledge Medal



UNDERGROUND TEMPLE 1

A 270G
B Counter Ring
C Movement Seed





Getting through the tunnels is easy...



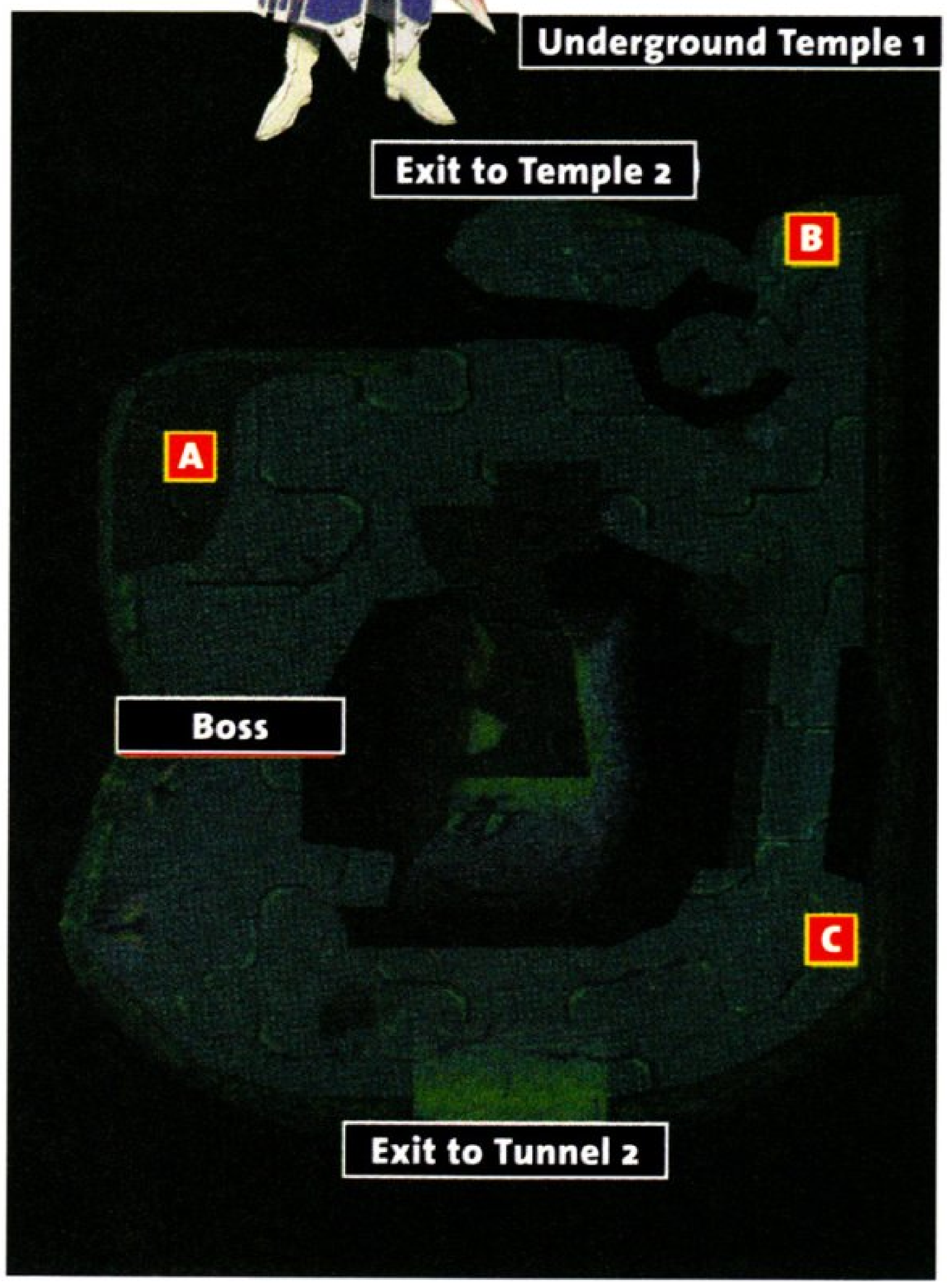
... Especially with the maps here!



A set piece about to occur? Oh yes!

UNDERGROUND TUNNEL 4

A 270G
B 270G
C 270G
D 270G
E 810G
F Everything Seed
G Strength Seed
H Movement Seed
I Mana Egg





AERIAL BATTLESHIP

Justin's escape from the Underground Tunnels takes him to the Aerial Battleship - the pride of the Imperial Fleet. Once you're onboard get into the lift, which takes you to the main passage of the battleship (as seen in the map). Work your way through this to the outside of the ship and then move on to the boss stage. You need to fight the three lieutenants again and this time they're really out for blood - mainly because you're fighting them all simultaneously. After this is a set piece, involving Justin's escape from the ship - you won't have problems here - just have a few potions ready for your encounter with the general.

RAINBOW MOUNTAIN/ ALENTE

With the Battleship destroyed, Justin and Fina meet up with the gang back at Gido's little tent at the North Burinan Heights (see map last issue - you're near the save point). From here you need to access the Rainbow Mountain, which is in the Rumi Village area. Go back to the village and pay a visit to Marda and the Mayor at their respective abodes. After the FMV is over, leave town via the now opened pass to the north. But remember to get more of those useful 150HP potions and stick 'em in your magic chest.

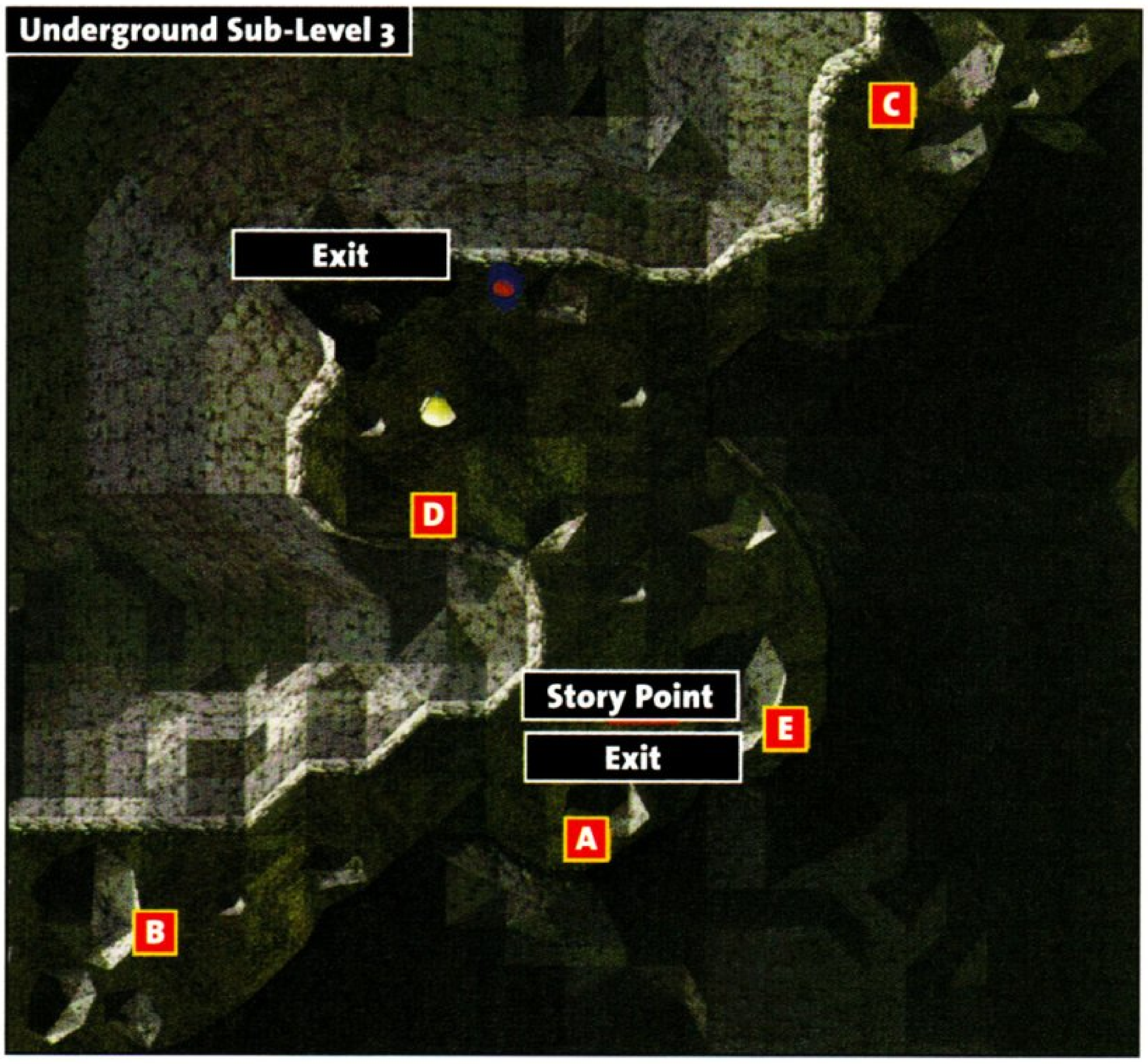
Despite some pretty inhospitable wildlife, you should not have too many hassles getting to the summit of this two-stage level, where you're warped to Alente for some triple boss action!

The first boss is defeated like this: take out the third head from the left first as this heals the beast. Then concentrate fire on the second head from the left (this is the main damage dealer). Then concentrate on the body. You won't have problems with the other bosses. After this you're taken into an area populated completely by spectral copies of the character Riete. Talk to them all until only one remains. Follow her to warp back to terra firma.

AND FINALLY...

We haven't got the space to print detailed guides and maps to the rest of the game, but these general tips should help you through. If you've got this far with our help, you won't have any problems finishing off the game.

After Alente, you end up back at the Savannah Plains. Go back to Jirpadon and rest up, arming your characters with any weapons and armour you can afford (and after taking those boss-





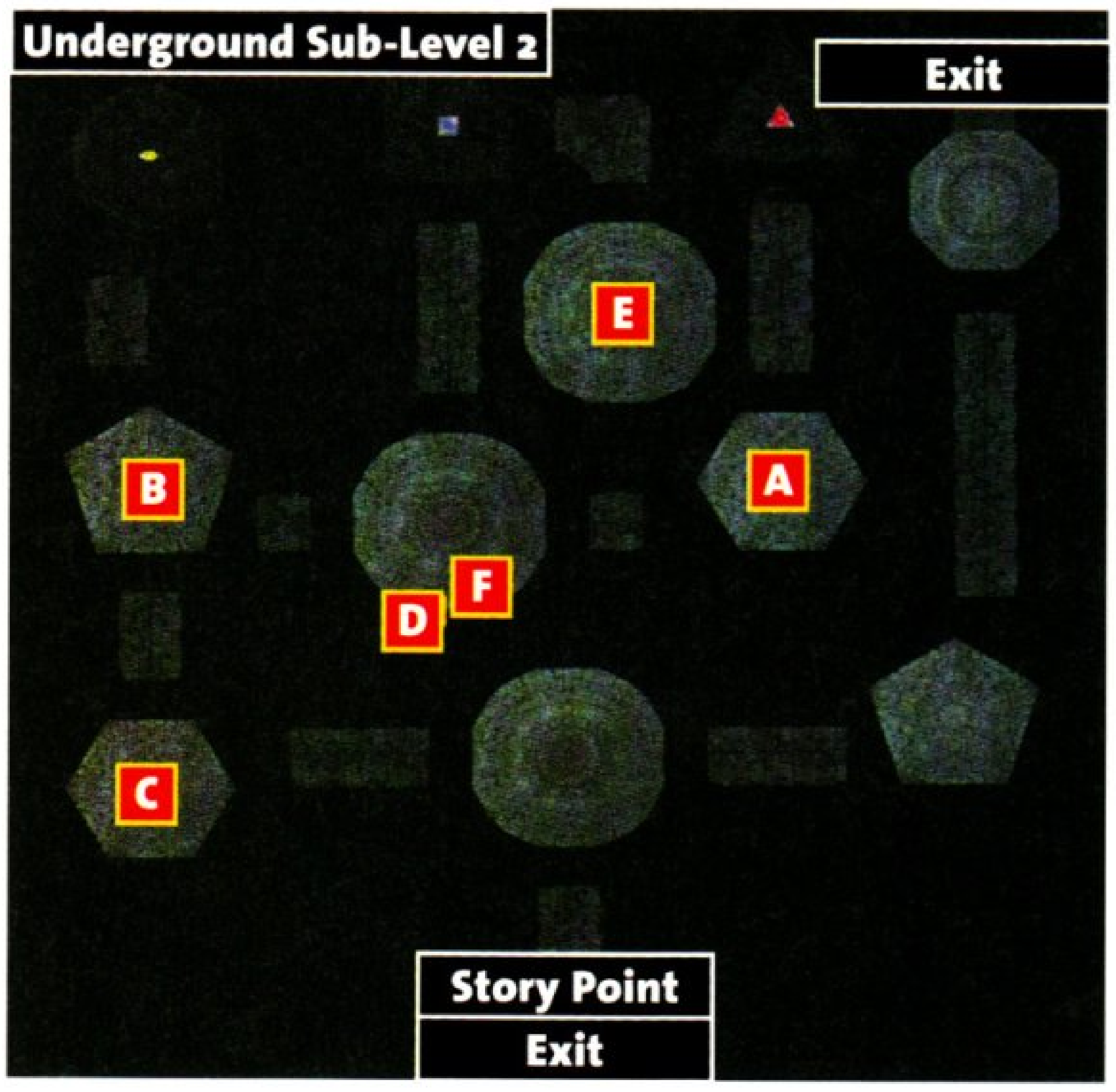
Justin's alone in the sub-level areas.

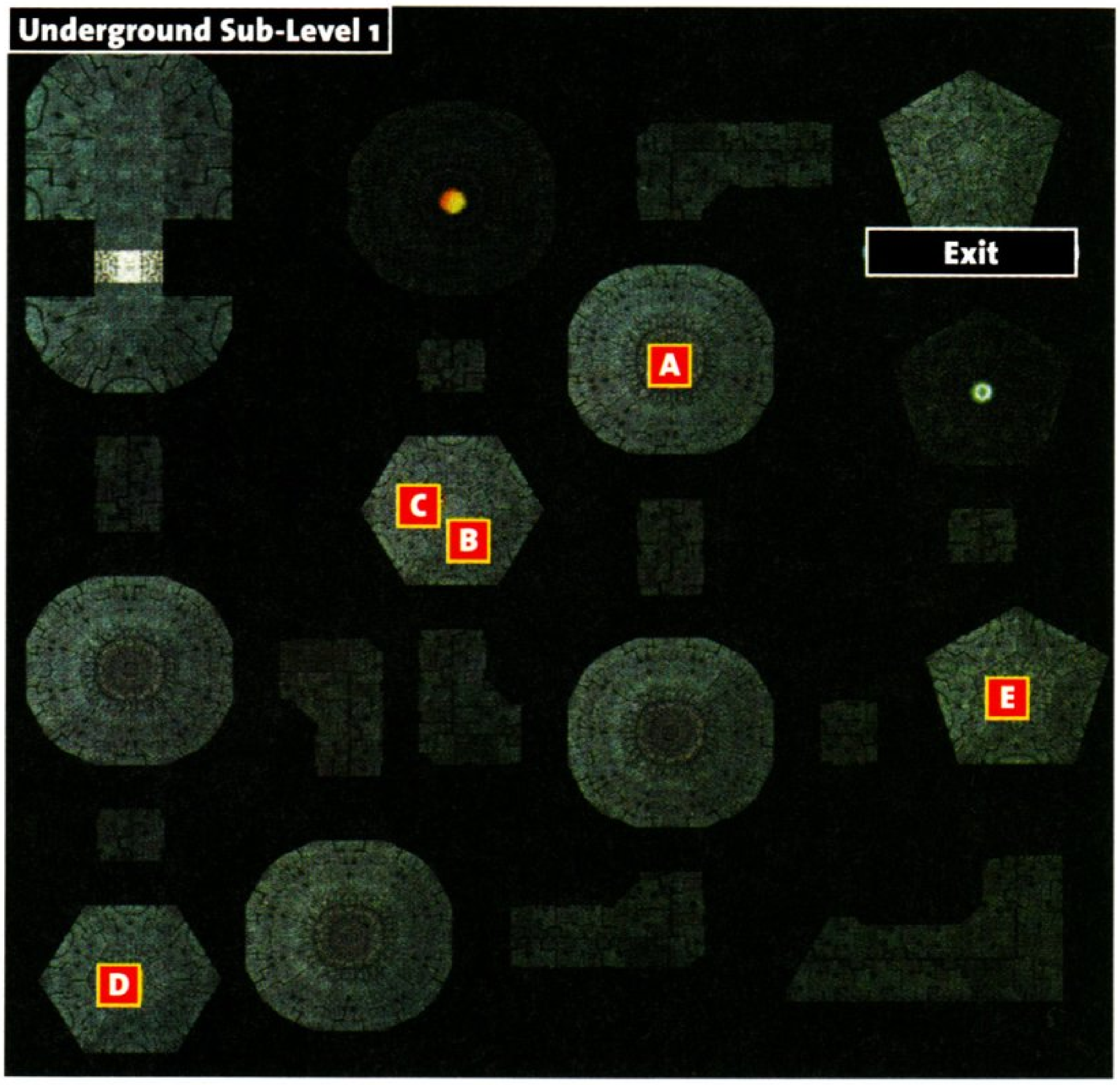


Justin: fighting on his lonesome!

UNDERGROUND SUB-LEVEL 3

A	270G
B	270G
C	Speed Seed
D	Strength Seed
E	Resurrection Stone





UNDERGROUND SUB-LEVEL 2

A	270G
B	270G
C	270G
D	Crimson Herb
E	Speed Seed
F	Earth Charm

UNDERGROUND SUB-LEVEL 1

A	270G
B	270G
C	810G
D	Magic Sight Stone
E	Magic Strength Seed



AERIAL BATTLESHIP MAIN PASSAGE	
A	280G
B	280G
C	840G
D	840G
E	Uoria Metal
F	Secret Fruit

es down, you'll have plenty!). From here go on to the new location, Reza Mountain Pass. This level is simplicity itself: it's split into two areas and there are two shortcuts on the second part to locate.

After this point you reach Outpost J. Go up the stairs and through the door on the right... this leads down to the reactor core. Here you'll find the principal bad guy... again. He's easily defeated, but his latter incarnation post-mutation ain't so easy to best... After this, you move on to the Army Camp to find Fina. Talk to Lin instead and check out Jirpadon to see the full extent of the damage.

It's damage limitation at Jirpadon - everything's in ruins and you need to defeat the remaining bosses, then gather up the survivors. Once this is done, go back to the Army Camp for more news. It turns out that Lin has set out to confront the evil at the reactor core. Return there then seek out the control room (it's through the left door in the main room and up the stairs). Go outside next - you need to use the room you passed on the way up the stairs.

After the antics with Fina and Muren have played out, return to Gido's House and talk for a while there the head back to the Army Camp... the problem is, everyone's gone! Travel to Jirpadon and visit Justin's tent, then move on to the main street for the next piece of story exposition!

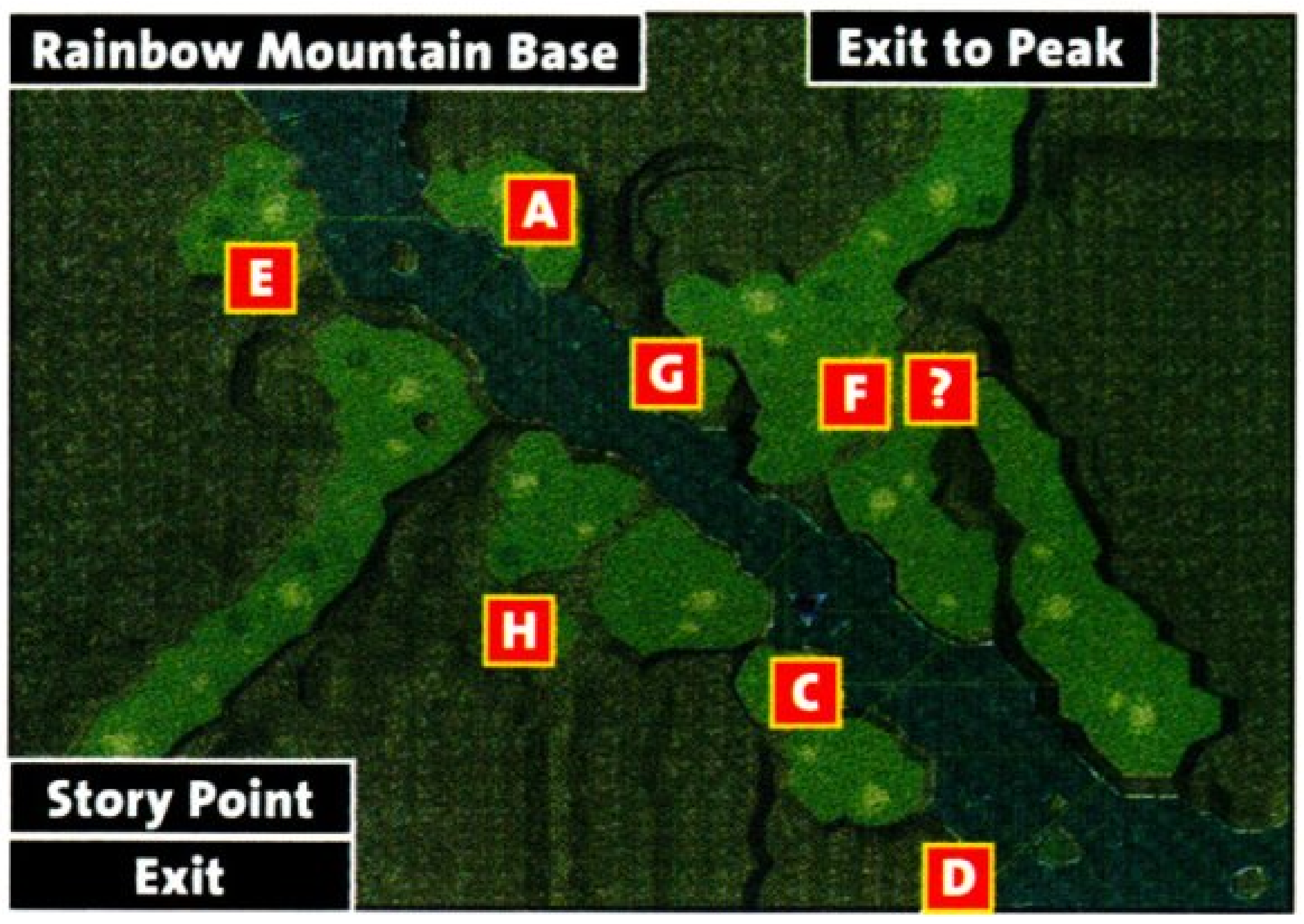


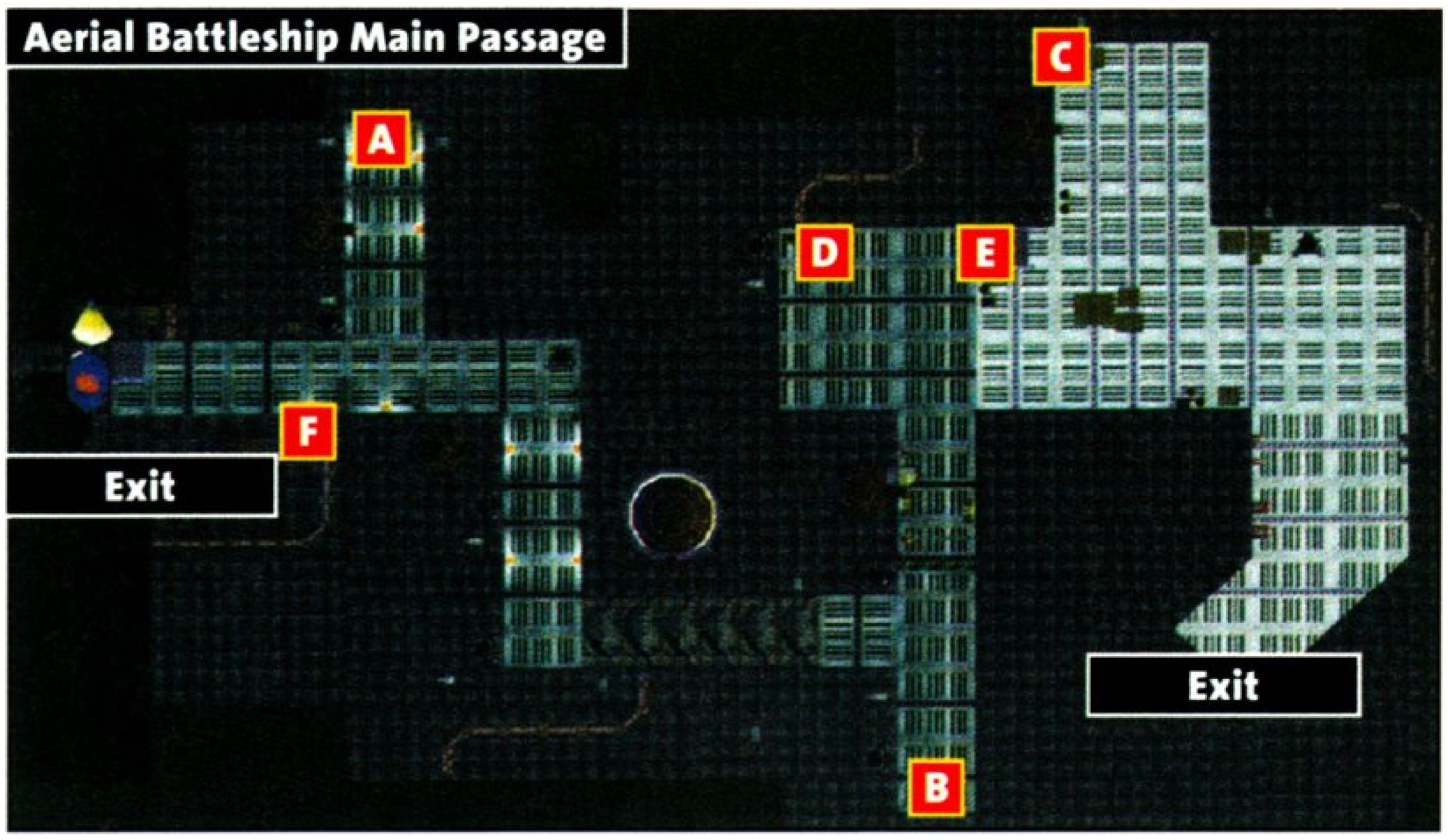
AERIAL BATTLESHIP CONTROL ROOM	
A	280G
B	280G
C	280G
D	280G
E	280G

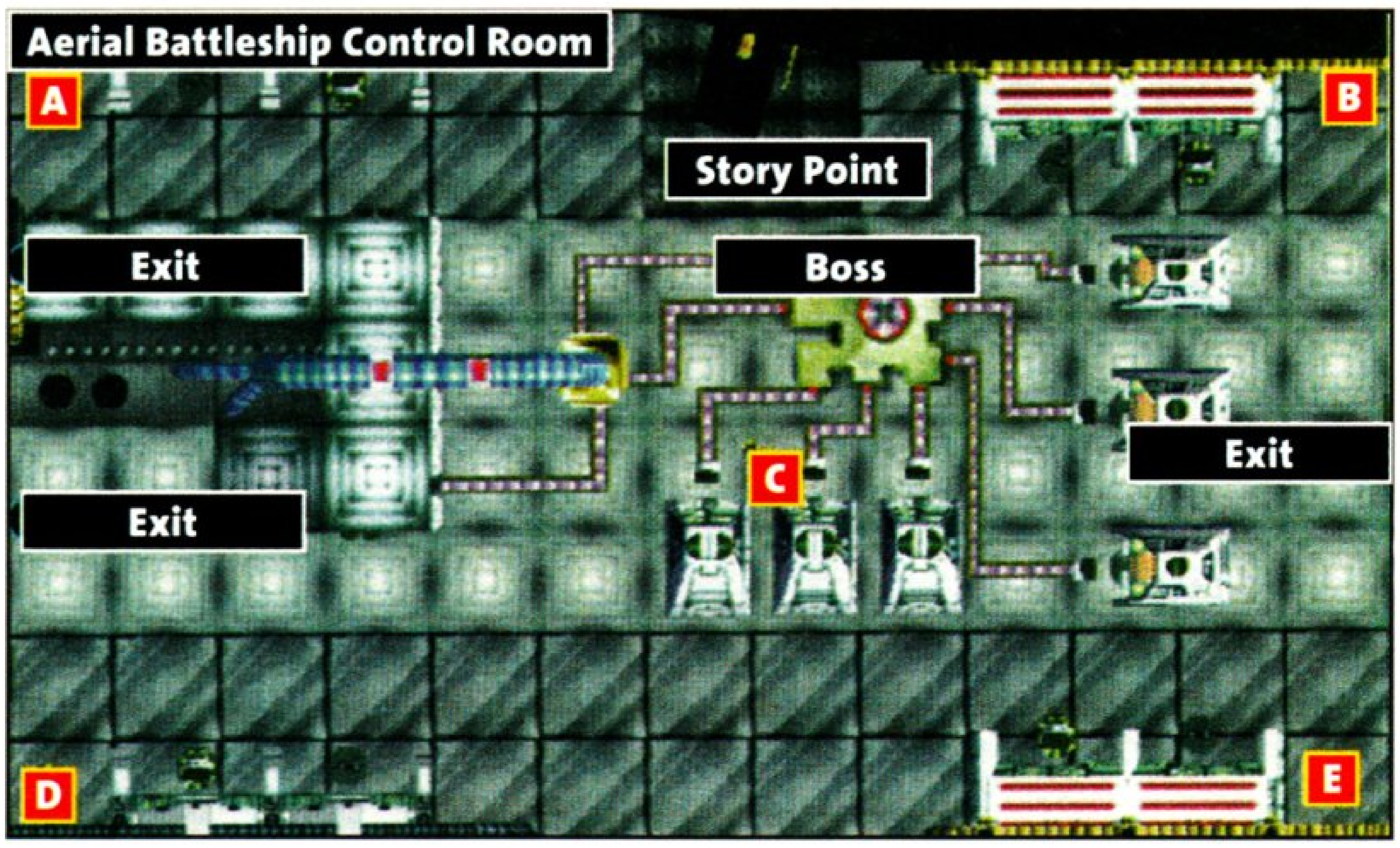
The new level, Heaven, opens up. Riete tells you to explore the level to find a powerful sword with which to vanquish the evil once and for all. It's a bit of a logic puzzle here as the floors are all pressure-sensitive, meaning you have to pick your way through the level carefully. After you've bested the boss, return to Outpost J one final time. The whole area has been desolated and you need to jump into the hole, locate Fina and then confront Muren, before heading on.

The final stage, Gaia Lair, weighs in at three stages of action.You won't have any problems with the first two stages, but the last area offers multiple routes. The quickest path is through the red, yellow, green then blue vessels. Use the door with the RGB valve, activate the switches in the other room and then ready yourself for the final boss!







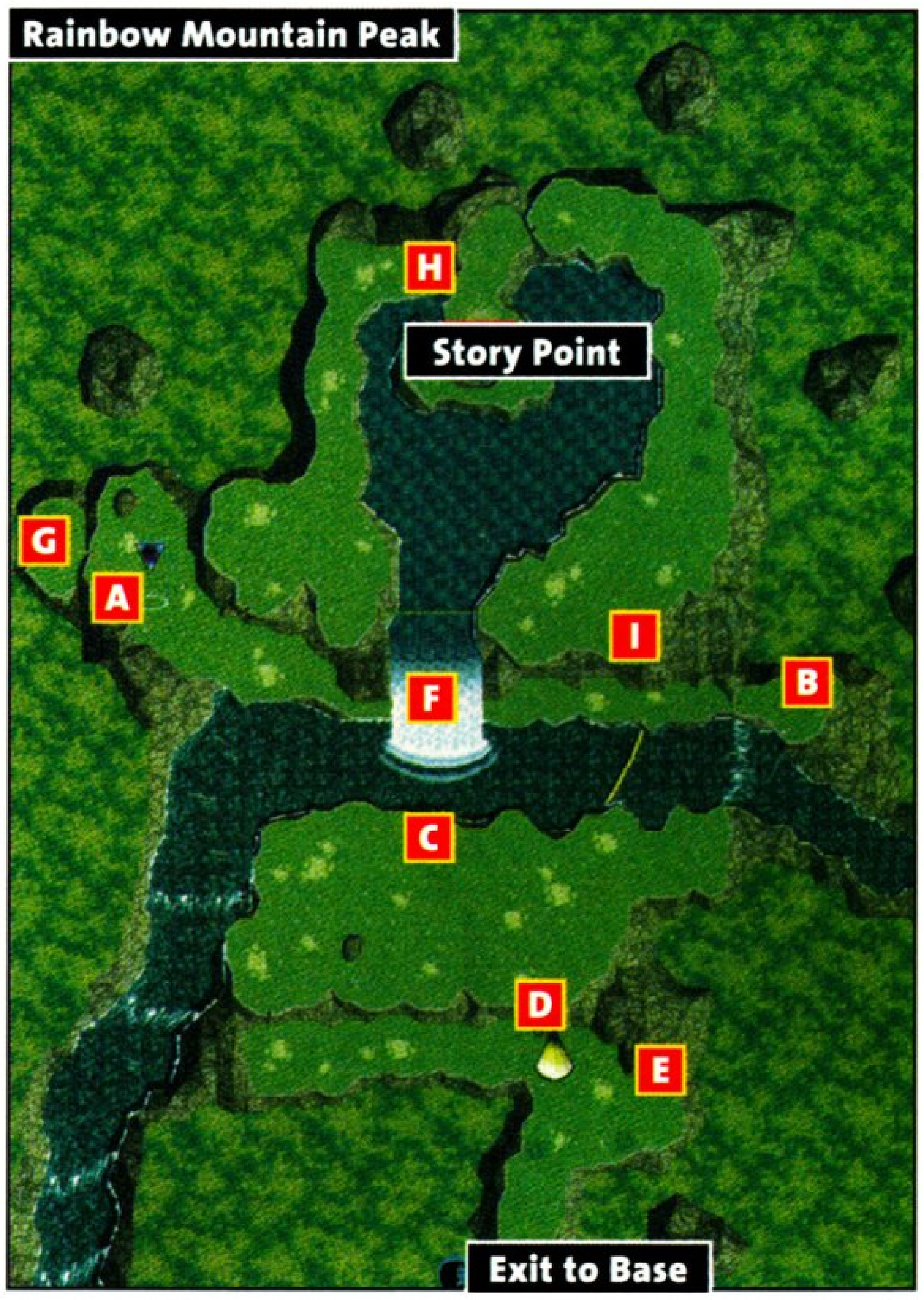




Curiously the Alente area of Grandia bears similarities to the Digital Museum (page 40).

RAINBOW MOUNTAIN PEAK	
A	290G
B	290G
C	290G
D	290G
E	290G
F	870G
G	Ties of Trust
H	Resistance Fruit
I	Resistance Seed

RAINBOW MOUNTAIN BASE	
A	290G
B	290G
C	290G
D	870G
E	Life Fruit
F	Life Fruit
G	Illusion Silk
H	Resistance Seed



COIN-OPERATED

Japanese gamers are already thrilling to the power of AM3's stunning coin-op sequel and the good news is... it's coming to the UK soon! In-depth Virtual-On OT coverage provided this issue by WARREN HARROD.

Without a doubt the hottest game at all the major arcade shows in Japan for the past year has been Sega's Virtual-On Oratorio Tangram. As one of the most eagerly awaited sequels of all time, it isn't surprising to learn that on its initial release it was actually the first game ever to knock Virtua Fighter 3 off the number one spot in the arcade ranking tables. Pretty impressive, eh?

Powered by two one million polygon/sec Model 3: Step 2 boards, Virtual-On OT has some of the most spectacular videogame graphics ever seen. However, the visual effects are just so intense that printed screenshots really fail to do this game justice. You really have to see Virtual-On OT in action to appreciate what AM3 have managed to achieve.





▲ Stunning visual effects are the game's trademark.

MAKIN' MECHS

Gameplay is fast and furious with intuitive controls making it easy to get to grips with the many moves of your chosen Virtuaroid. Even beginners will be able to execute some stunning attacks with minimal effort, while those gamers more used to the complexity of titles like Fighting Vipers will find that underneath the simple control system are a diverse range of attacks and movements that will take ages to master.

In addition, not only have new Virtuaroids been added (there are now a total of twelve 'bots to battle with), but the existing ones have all been completely redesigned by Hajime Katoki, a very famous and respected designer in Japan. Each Virtuaroid's unique characteristics now enhance the gameplay considerably. What's more, the weapons each Virtuaroid uses are much more unique and distinct than before, so it's actually worth playing Virtual-On OT right to the end with each of the Mechs.

While the mission locations do look a little



▲ The sequel now boasts 12 playable Virtuaroids.



▲ The coin-op's backdrops are even more impressive.





▲ Check out the unbelievable level of detail evident in Virtual-On OT. That's the power of Model 3: Step 2 for ya!





▲ The new improved Raiden struts his stuff.


CYBER TROOPERS
電脳戦機バーチャロン
VIRTUAL ON
ORATORIO TANGRAM
SEGA
STAFF





▲ Newcomer Specineff takes a real battering.



▲ As these screenshots so clearly demonstrate, Virtual-On OT pushes the Model 3 board to the limit.

empty and flat, you don't tend to notice this much during the heat of the battle. However, the Undersea Plant and the Abandoned Quarry are just excellent!

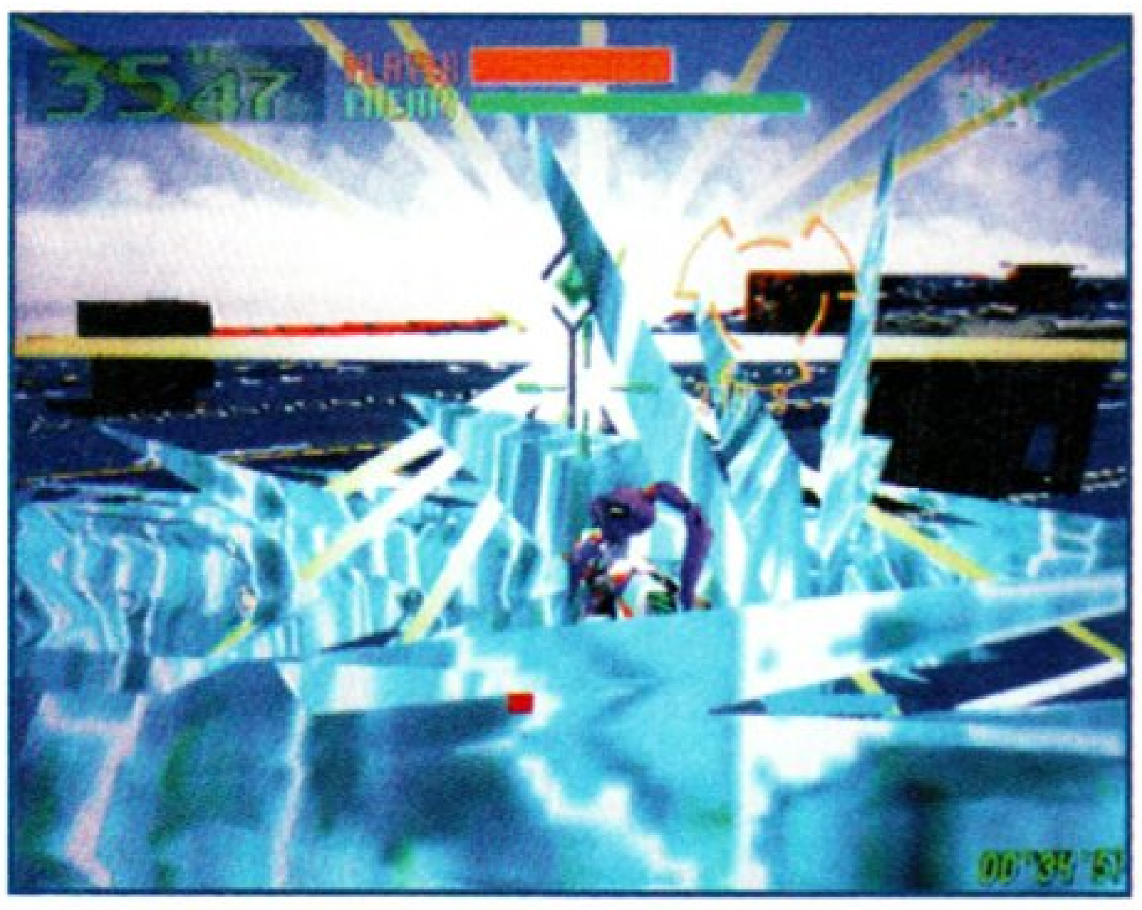
FUTURE TENSE

Far into Earth's future, the DNA company has managed to create a huge weapon of vast destruction called the Moon Gate. However, at the same time a rival company, called RNA, challenges DNA for control of Earth's key installations and war breaks out. Both companies claim right of ownership to various industrial plants, and in order to strengthen their strategic position DNA and RNA begin fighting each other to try capture these areas.

However, as they finally approach the climax of the war, one of the plants which held the main system of the TANGRAM (Space Time Causation Control Mechanism) vanishes from the space-time continuum!



Considering that it has the ability to operate the Moon Gate, the loss of this plant means catastrophic danger to the Earth. The company which discovers the missing plant will be able to seize the initiative in the war's stalemate situation. Both companies, DNA and RNA, possess Virtuaroid Cyber Troopers. You take control of one of these factions and fight your rival over various missions until you finally win control of the Moon Gate. Each mission sends players to a different plant where the objective is to defeat your opponent's Virtuaroid and secure that location. Each stage is guarded by a different Virtuaroid and has a wide variety of terrain, requiring players to use different tactics for each mission.





▲ Cypher dodges an incoming laser blast just in time.



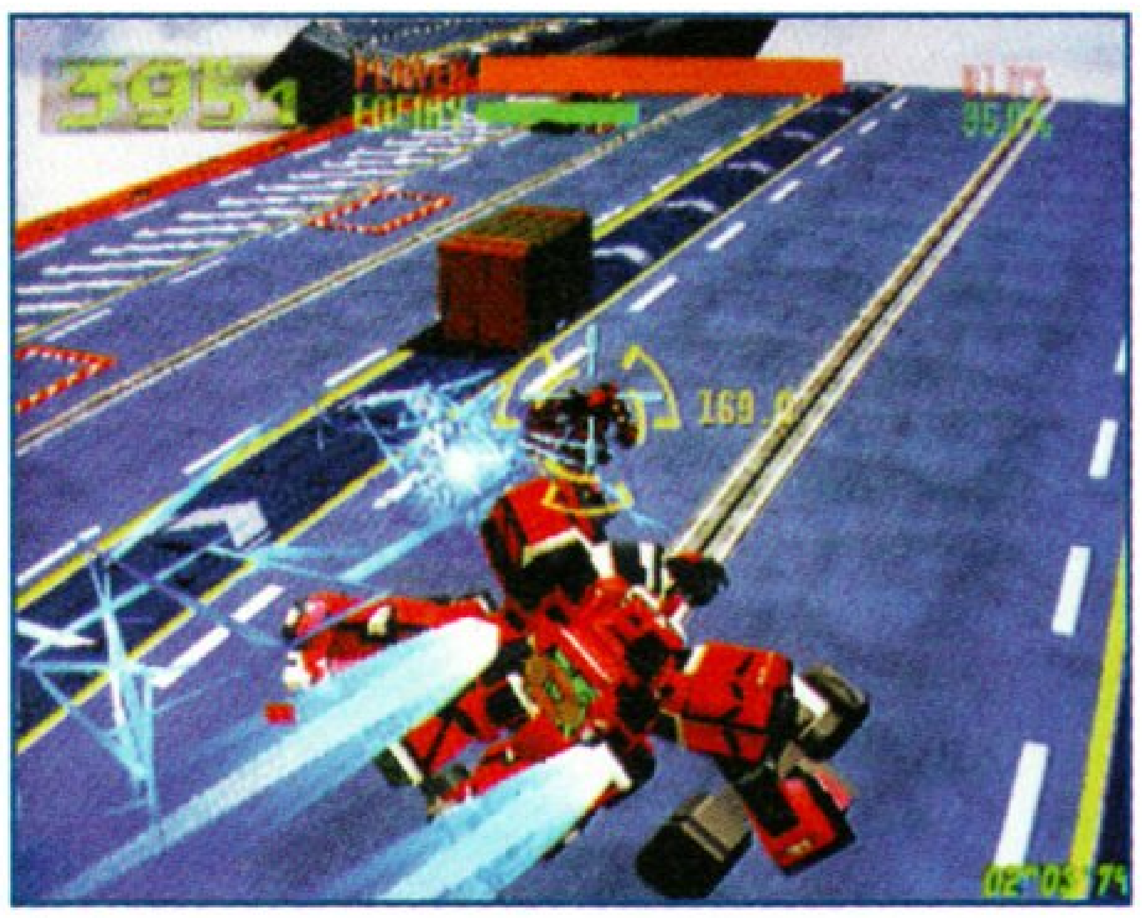




▲ Use available scenery to launch sneaky attacks.



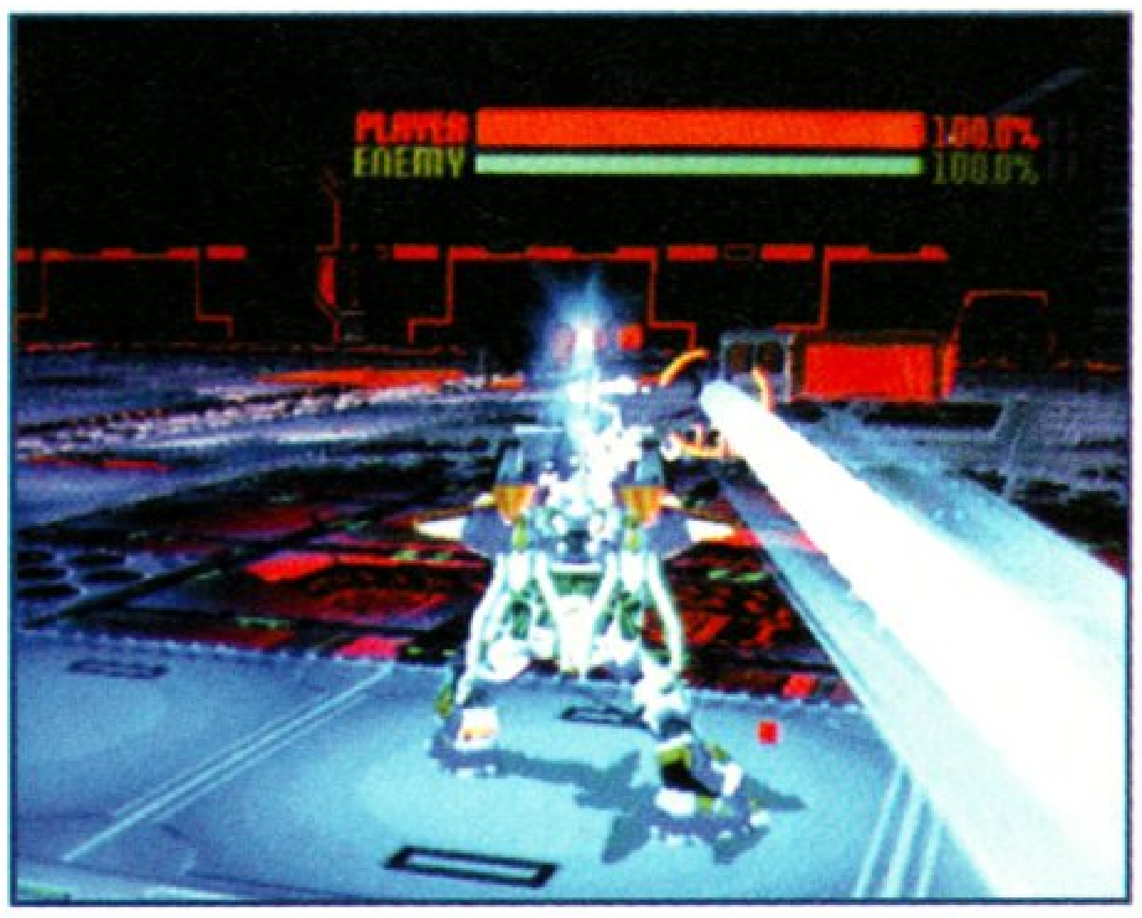
▲ Poor Fei-Yen Kn is taken down by a well-timed missile.



▲ As in the original game, jumps still come in handy.

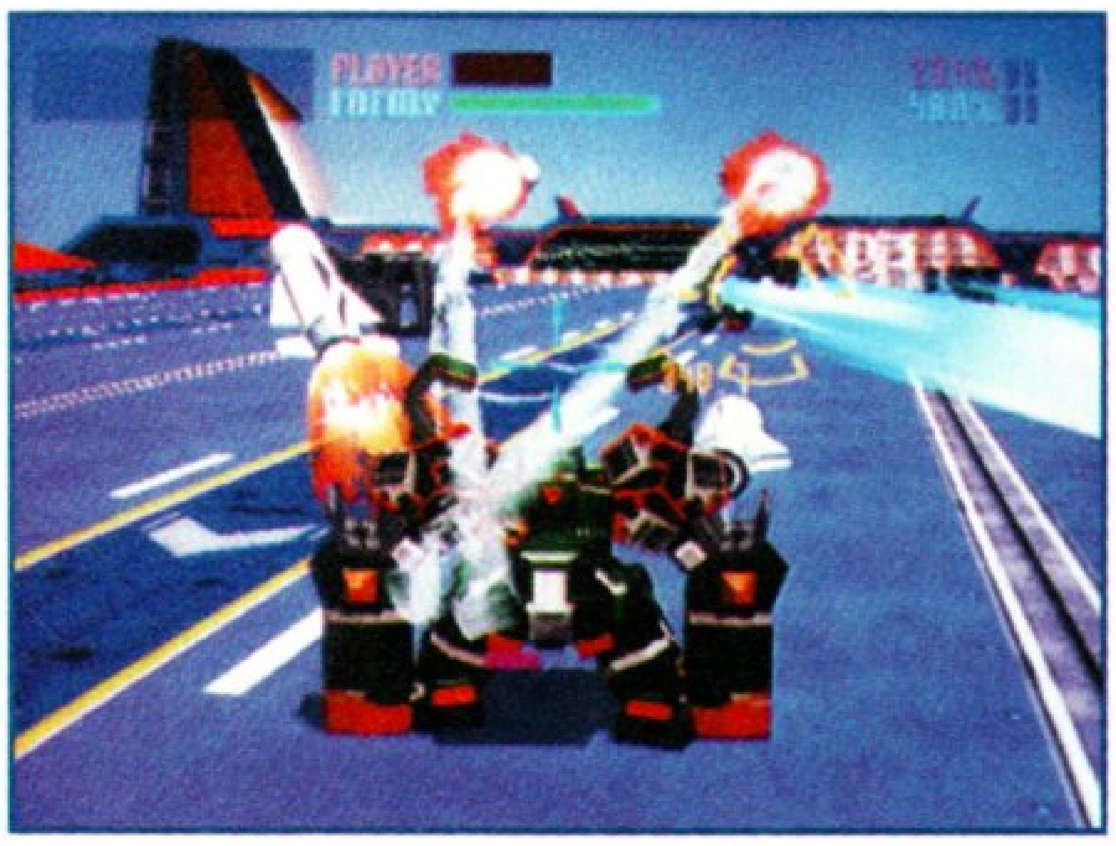


▲ Special moves may be used for attack or defense.



▲ Players take on all comers in a mighty mech slugfest!





▲ Grys-Vok lets rip with his twin shoulder launchers.



▲ Bal-Bados unleashes the power of his Beam Launcher on an unsuspecting foe. Better duck, pal...

CYBER CONTROL SYSTEM

Virtual-On OT uses two levers (left and right), each of which has one button (Turbo) and one trigger (Weapon). By using them in various combinations players operate all of the Virtuaroid's various functions. Basically, if you've played the original game, and mastered its tricky control method, then AM3's sequel should prove to be no real hassle. However, practice is recomended!

MECH MOVEMENT

The left and right levers control their respective sides of the Virtuaroids. Moving both levers in the same direction moves the mech in that particular direction while pressing them in opposite directions rotates your Mech around or makes it jump. By pressing the Turbo buttons at the same time, players have the ability to dash as well. Combinations of these moves are also possible.

WEAPONS OF WAR

Each Virtuaroid is equipped with three basic weapons: left (left trigger), right (right trigger) and centre (both triggers). However, depending on your movement and various other factors, each weapon is capable of various attack types. In fact there are double the number of attacks that the original Virtual-On had. By pressing the Turbo button as well, players can perform a turbo shot attack!



▲ Cypher's lethal special moves are powerful indeed.



▲ Grys-Vok in all his texture-mapped glory.



▲ Damaged mechs spray armour shards and body parts.

VIRTUAROID SPECIFICATIONS

The Virtuaroids are divided into two categories depending on their classification type. Both types are commonly used by the DNA and RNA companies and there are no special differences between them. On the select screen all the Type 1 Virtuaroids are immediately selectable. I you want to use one of the Type 2 Virtuaroids, one of them is chosen at random for you.







APHARMD B
(The Battler)
TYPE: Ultra battle Virtuaroid
CODE: RVR-39
LEFT WEAPON: Grenade Discharger
CENTRE WEAPON: Tongfer
RIGHT WEAPON: Sub-Machine Gun



GRYS-VOK
TYPE: Multi-Target Mech
CODE: SAV-326-D
LEFT WEAPON: Overhead Launcher
CENTRE WEAPON: Shoulder Launcher
RIGHT WEAPON: Missile Launcher



TEMJIN
TYPE: Basic Virtuaroid
CODE: MBV-707-F
LEFT WEAPON: Power Bomb
CENTRE WEAPON: Sword
RIGHT WEAPON: Long Launcher









RAIDEN
TYPE: Advanced optical weapon equipped Virtuaroid
CODE: HMV-502-H
LEFT WEAPON: Ground Napalm Cannon
CENTRE WEAPON: Laser
RIGHT WEAPON: Hyper Bazooka



BAL-BADOS
TYPE: Complex multi-function prototype Virtuaroid
CODE: XBV-819-TR
LEFT WEAPON: Thigh Launcher
CENTRE WEAPON: Beam Launcher
RIGHT WEAPON: Hand Launcher



ANGELAN
TYPE: Magical ice power Virtuaroid
CODE: SGV-417-L
LEFT WEAPON: Hand Shot
CENTRE WEAPON: Crystal Bit
RIGHT WEAPON: Rod Shot

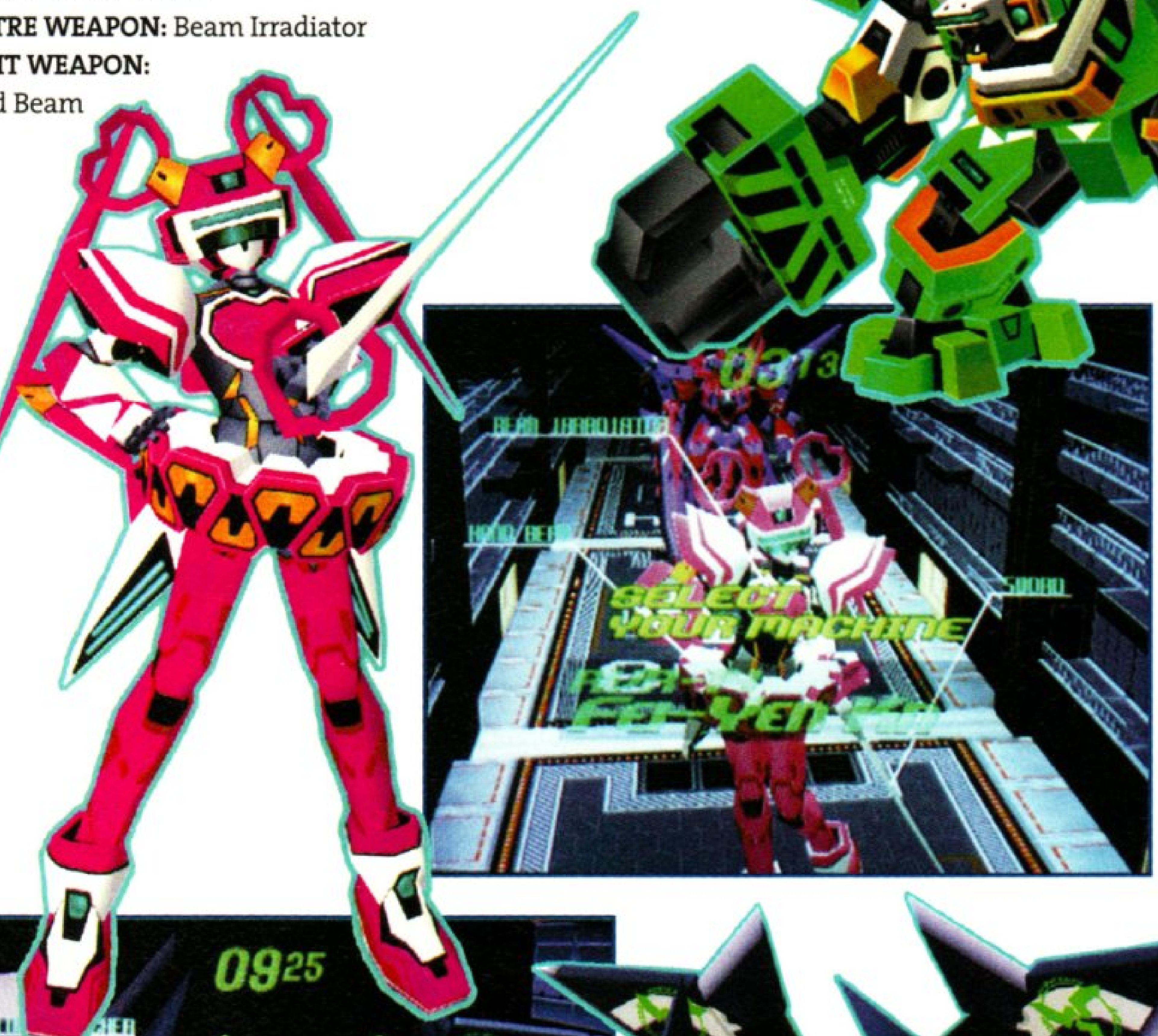
APHARMD S (The Striker)
TYPE: Ultra thermalized Mech
CODE: RVR-33
LEFT WEAPON: Knife
CENTRE WEAPON: Grenade Launcher
RIGHT WEAPON: Funny Launcher



FEI-YEN KN (The Knight)
TYPE: Mobile Emphatic Virtuaroid
CODE: RVR-14
LEFT WEAPON: Sword
CENTRE WEAPON: Beam Irradiator
RIGHT WEAPON: Hand Beam



DORDRAY
TYPE: Armoured assault Virtuaroid
CODE: RVR-68
LEFT WEAPON: Drill
CENTRE WEAPON: V Hurricane
RIGHT WEAPON: Claw Launcher



CYPHER
TYPE: Mobile transforming Virtuaroid
CODE: RVR-42
LEFT WEAPON: Dagger
CENTRE WEAPON: Beam Launcher
RIGHT WEAPON: Multi-Launcher





SPECINEFF
TYPE: Assassination Virtuaroid
CODE: RVR-87
LEFT WEAPON: Scythe
CENTRE WEAPON: Boomerang
RIGHT WEAPON: Long Launcher



▲ Sega Saturn Magazine - the Japanese version (no relation).

Up the back end

Sit back, relax, think of England and brace yourself for a nu-wave info-frenzy...

So, made it through another top issue of the mag then? Don't stop reading just yet - waste some time reading this tatty nonsense! Yes, the SSM Tatty Nonsense department has been working overtime this month to bring you... this lot!

QUESTIONS OF GLOBAL UNIMPORTANCE

Join us, readers, in a trivia-tastic question-quest of no relevance whatsoever! The correct answers are printed elsewhere on these pages, should you get stuck on any hard ones.

1. Which one of these is NOT the name of a Treasure game?
a. Gunstar Heroes
b. Guardian Heroes
c. Dynamite Headdy
d. Radiant Silvergun
e. Dairylea Triangle

2. What precious metal is Wolverine's skeleton enhanced with?
a. Adamantium
b. Duranduranium
c. Statusquovium
d. Prodigium



▲ Wolverine: he has some difficulty keeping his lycra costume clean.

3. Do you like the name 'Dreamcast'?
a. Yes
b. No

4. Complete the following sentence from Duke Nukem: "Damn! Those alien bastards are..."
a. ...incompatible with my genitals
b. ...tasty!
c. ...gonna pay for shooting up my ride
d. ...talking to me via the radio in my head
e. ...quite attractive when you think about it

5. In a survey of 100 super-heroes, what did they vote the WORST thing about being a super-hero?
a. Problems with personal life
b. Very high insurance premiums
c. Being on call 24 hours a day
d. Being tempted by the dark side
e. Lycra is very difficult to clean

6. And what did they vote the BEST thing about being a super-hero?
a. Fun with X-Ray vision
b. Chicks dig men in lycra
c. Making a difference
d. Not having to worry about dying

7. In a survey of 100 platform game characters, what did they vote the WORST thing about being in a platform game?
a. Having to smile, even when you're not feeling 100%
b. Not being taken seriously



▲ One of the Japanese girlfriend games. Thought you'd like it.

VIRTUA FIGHTER: THE MOVIE!

It was only a matter of time until the super-successful VF series was made into a movie - we've managed to gather some exclusive news, casting details and even managed to trace an early version of the plot!

THE PLOT...

Maverick cop Akira (Pacino) saw his partner killed in an undercover drugs bust that went tragically wrong. The South American drugs baron Juanita Dural, was believed to be behind the killing - now Akira wants revenge! At first, he doesn't get along with his new partner Pai (Ryder), but they grow to love each other during the hard times, with his wise-cracking, happy-go-lucky style winning her over. Meanwhile, Dural is making plans of her own - brainwashing some of the world's top fighters to join her elite weapon-smuggling team, with one horrifying goal - the total destruction of the entire world! Can one man stop her? Can one man save the world? Can one man make a difference? Can YOU stand the excitement of Virtua Fighter: The Movie?

THE MAJOR PLAYERS...

At the moment, only five of the major characters have been cast, with the film's director being keen to go for a mixture of classic acting experience and new, raw talent.

AKIRA - Al Pacino

Method-acting Pacino would love this role, spending years in a Himalayan mud hut honing his combat skills to perfection, while also learning to speak fluent Japanese.







▲ Mmm, another cool Japanese babe-game. Plot? Don't care.

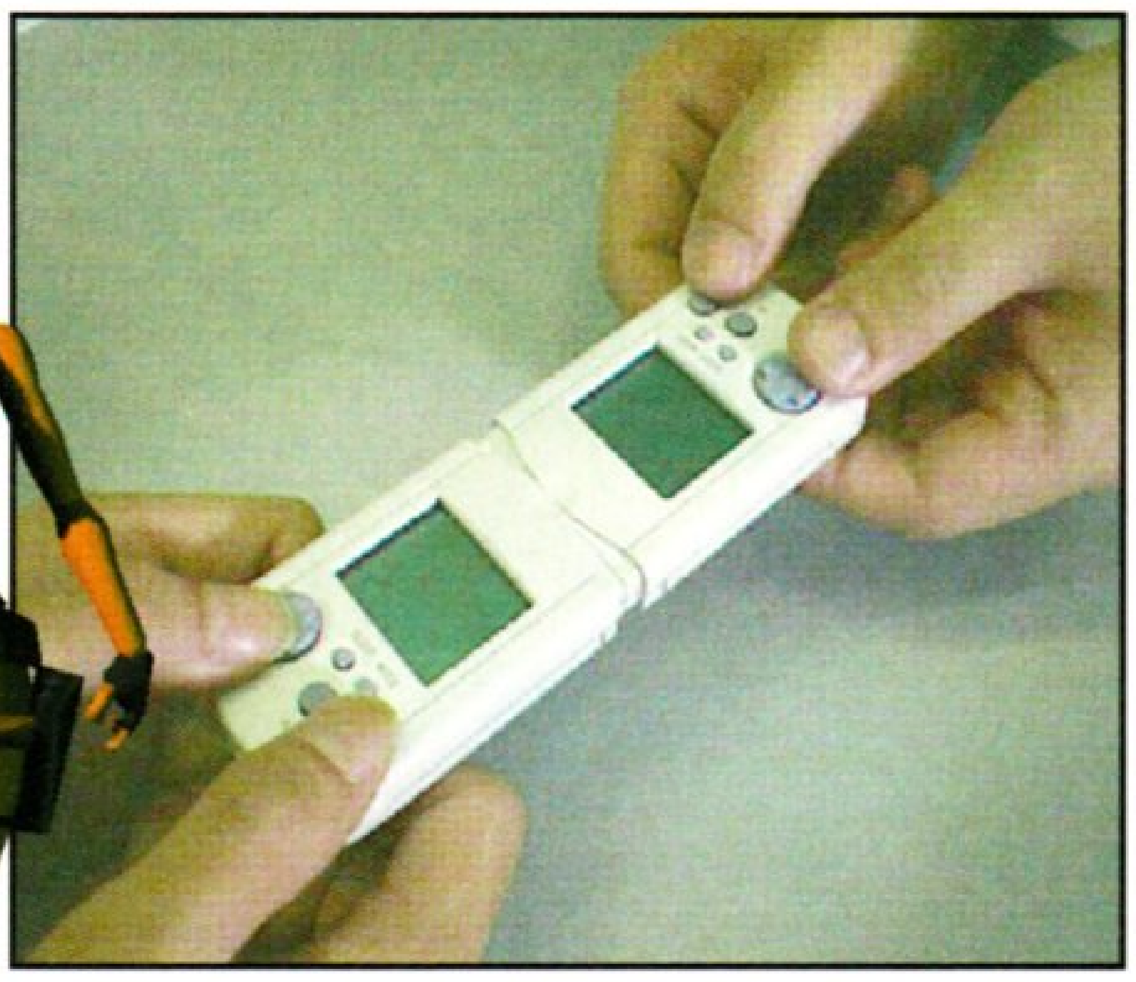




c. That damn music
d. Getting cold feet in the ice levels

8. And what did they vote the BEST thing about being in a platform game?
a. A nice, happy atmosphere
b. Getting to see lots of nice places
c. Bottom bouncing
d. Not having to worry about dying

9. Whatever happened to Lara Croft?
a. She's alive and well, living in a council estate in Swindon.
b. She's a successful recording artist in Germany
c. She took the sad old alcohol/ drug addiction/ prostitution road to ruin
d. Sold her body to Sony



▲ They're doing it with each other! Techno-porn, VMS style.

10. Why did Sega release Courier Crisis as one of its final Saturn games?
a. They thought no one would notice
b. They got it confused with something else
c. A work experience boy released it by mistake
d. They got really drunk and it seemed like a good idea at the time
e. God only knows

11 Why hasn't Sega released Grandia or Dead or Alive over here?
a. They thought no one would notice
b. They got them confused with something else
c. A work experience boy cancelled them by mistake
d. God only knows

12. How excited are we all about the Dreamcast?
a. Quite excited
b. Very excited
c. Really, really excited
d. We're UNBELIEVABLY excited

13. Last issue, what did Sega's president, Shoichiro Irimajiri say the Dreamcast logo represented?
a. The origin of power and the universe itself
b. A swirly thing
c. An orange swirly thing
d. A round orange swirly thing

JAPANESE ADVERT OF THE MONTH

Girls in their bras? A strange semi-naked man dressed like a king? Are they being serious, or have they been spying on our planning meetings? It's pretty hard to tell what goes on in the minds of Japanese advertisers, as this fascinating advert shows:





UNIMPORTANT ANSWERS

1 - e. **2** - a. **3** - It's just your own opinion, therefore there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer. **4** - c. **5** - e. **6** - a. **7** - a. **8** - c. **9** - d. **10** - d. **11** - d. **12** - d. **13** - a.

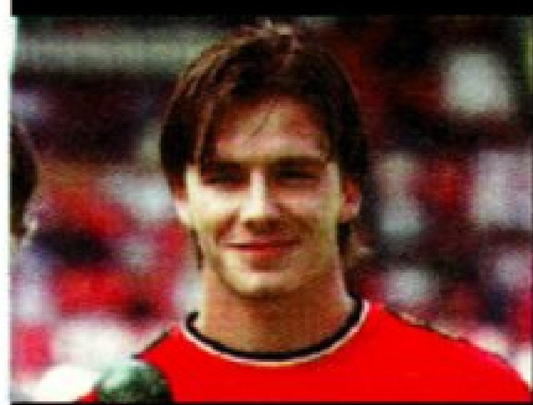
JEFFRY - Mr T

Mr T has proven himself time and time again in the combat arena - his bulk 'n' beard combo make him the perfect Jeffry. And of course, he's a wonderful actor, who also provides a few of the film's side-splittingly funny moments - "Akira! You are a fool!'




LION - David Beckham

Lion's got some fancy footwork, David's got a poncy floppy blonde fringe - perfectly interchangeable pretty-boy foot-based combat blokes. But don't hit his face, or you'll feel the force of his special move - the Thirty Yard Free Kick.




PAI - Winona Ryder

The action role that she needs, Ryder would be perfect as the nervous rookie cop Pai. The emotional scenes between her and Pacino's Akira are truly heart-rending, with Pai going through the whole range of emotions. And loads of shower scenes.




SARAH - Dannii Minogue

The film's main love-interest. The brainwashed Sarah tries to lure Akira to his death - using herself as bait! Can Akira penetrate Sarah's mental defences? Does he really love Pai, or is Sarah his destiny? A tense, emotional climax to the first half of the script. And loads of shower scenes.



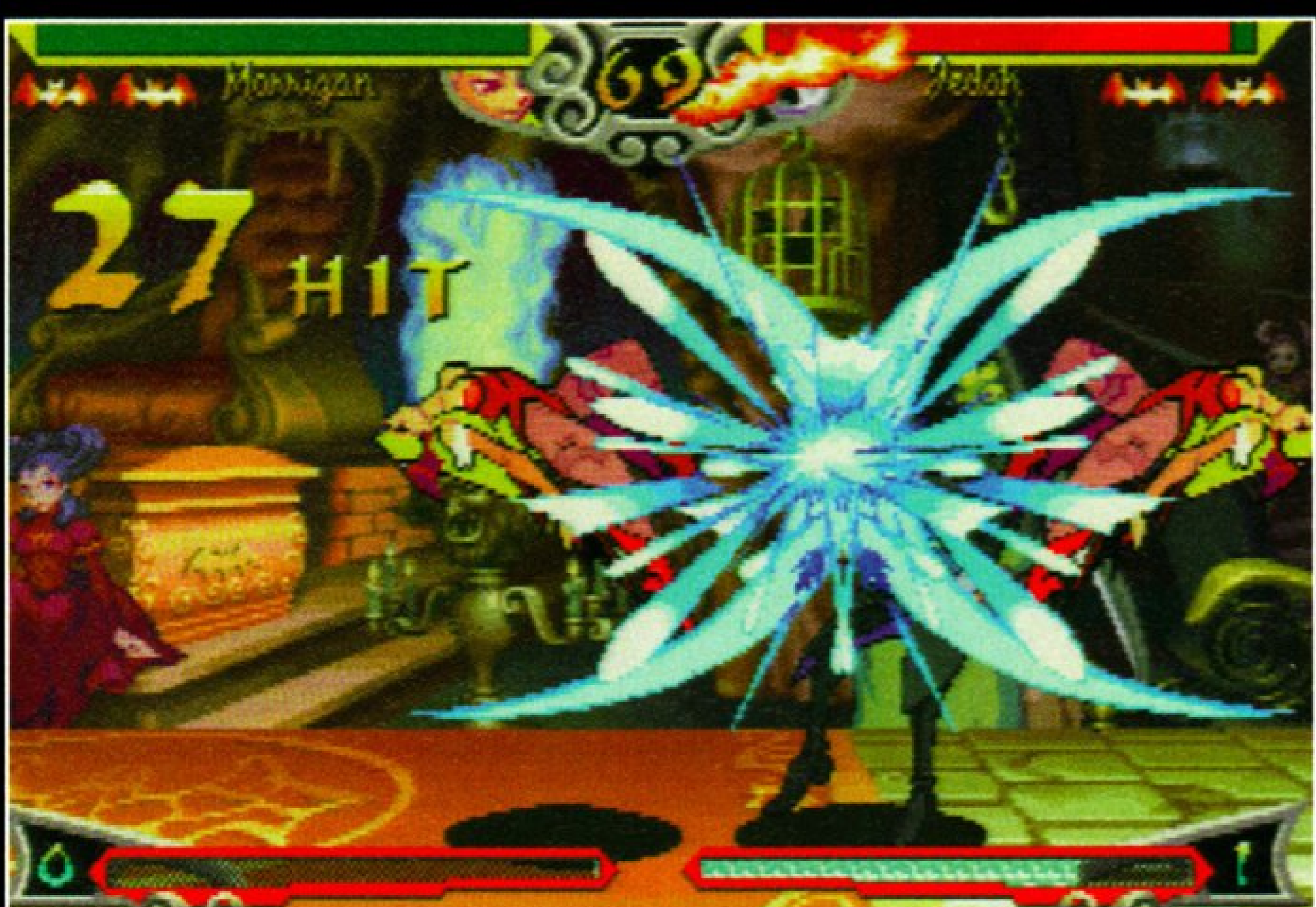

UNCONFIRMED...

Rumours that Sean Connery is set to play Shun are still unconfirmed, as are the possibilities of Sigourney Weaver shaving her head once more to play Dural, and Keanu Reeves growing a moustache and ponytail for the Lau role (due to the lack of any living actors with moustaches). And what about Jacky? He doesn't look remotely like anyone else... send us your suggestions for film/ game crossovers to the usual address. Make us laugh.





Suck my blood! Go on! Suck it! Please! Suck me dry! You know you want to.



Oh come on! Surely they can't stay in when she jumps like that! Pop out! NOW!

and finally...

Morrigan

Simply Gravity Defying!

It has become one of the greatest mysteries in the entire history of videogames... ever since starring on the cover of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE a couple of issues back, the world has been wondering... just how does Vampire Savior's Morrigan manage to remain fully clothed in the face of the raw power of gravity itself?

We could of course just blame it on that particular piece of artwork (which for some reason we were strangely drawn to plastering on our cover), but further evidence has recently come to light which shows the bizarre, mesmerising, and indeed gravity defying... er, aspects... of Morrigan. And there they are, obviously emanating some kind of brain-washing hypnotic power.

According to the Capcom's literature, Morrigan is a succubus. So what is a Succubus, exactly? The results will scare you. Our dictionary definition reads thus: "A female demon believed to have sexual intercourse with men in their sleep". Hmmm... curious that we don't see any of that going on in Vampire Savior...



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